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LITERATURE AND LABOUR.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"It is difficult for Pride to put its ear to the ground and listen to the teachings of a lowly humanity."* The highly educated have but little idea of the great mental achievements of the children of toil, the noble labours of those who have had to rely upon their own exertion and diligence for all that they have done, who have been trained very far from the professorial chair, and the college hall and library; if this little book should fall in the way of those whose happy position in life has enabled them to command tutors, books, travel; who, with compara-

* Bancroft: Author of History of America.

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tive ease, are able to utter the open "*sesame*," to pronounce the Shibboleth or the Cabbala, by which languages unlocked their stores, and all arts their beauties—if this book should haply fall in the way of such as these, it will show that taste, and refinement of manners and of language, are catholic, and that genius is universal; that there are no barriers fencing in one section of humanity from perceptions and spiritual enjoyments peculiar to another section: the reader of Plato and Homer, of Horace and Virgil, will find the love of the spiritual life glowing in the bosoms of men upon whom he has been in the habit of looking with contempt; he will learn that true beauty unveils her charms and graces to the peasant who seeks her in a loving and humble spirit, as readily as to the learned *savant*, and the titled and wealthy bibliopolist and patron; he will learn that genius spurns the social castes and distinctions which the guilds and corporations of mechanical scholarship seek to impose; lives in its own world, wings its way through its own heavens, sails over its own seas, nor ever asks permission to indulge in its dreams, or to enjoy its domain and territory. Yes, the rich and the wealthy scholar, the elegant lounger of literature, may

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learn that his poorer brother, although he possesses no rent roll, no title deeds to vast and wide estates, holds possession of what to him furnishes far more ample enjoyment and satisfaction; is the owner and lord-warden of many a castle in the air, and possessor of many a glorious field in the realms of fairy land and imagination, whither he can at all times wander, and for the tenantry of which he pays no income or property tax; territories of which he cannot be deprived; where in thought he meets and holds communion with the best and bravest of earth's departed spirits; where he freshens his own mind with the gales, the waters, and the dews of immortality, and returning thence, pours the richness and the majesty of his musings over his brethren, till they follow him through his inheritance and pathway of light.

This is one thing done by the resurrection and inscription of names of genius in humble life upon some suitable page; but there is another good resulting from it, and that is the chief one aimed at: it may be a cause of pride and emulation in the cottage of the poor,—the lowly labourer may read it and learn how glorious is his brotherhood; that it may prove to him an incentive, and that by it he may be

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guided to attempt some noble mental effort: for Literature and Labour have been united together in illustrious names. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, and leadeth me beside the still waters." When may we suppose the touching words of this most beautiful poem were composed? Not by David when sitting upon his ivory throne, and wielding the sceptre of sovereignty, when Abner, and Joab, and the statesmen and generals of Israel stood by his side: not when the rude lustre and magnificence of the young kingdom stretched around him: but in the pastures of Bethlehem, when he stretched beneath some gentle over-hanging hill; when the flocks upon the pleasant pasturage, and by the cool stream, lay at ease before him; then, from his own position to his flock, his mind reverted to God's position to him; and touching that wonderful harp which he so well knew how to touch, said he, "The Lord is *my* shepherd." It would appear in his pastoral wanderings, that the gorgeous and magnificent imagery of the Hebrew land would most impress his mind; there, or from the retired depths of the wilderness, his mind would rise to that awful Being "who layeth the beams of

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his chambers in the waters, making the clouds his chariot, and walking on the wings of the wind." There, in the fierceness of the eastern day, sheltered in some pleasant cave or quiet glen, he would say, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." While, in the more tender season, "the out-goings of the morning and the evening would seem to rejoice." Then, in the still, profound night, the shepherd would read the awful pages of the stars, "When I consider the heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon, and the stars which thou hast ordained, Lord, what is man?" Morning, with all its awful Eastern brightness would inspire another hymn, "The heavens declare Thy glory, the firmament showeth Thy handy-work: day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge; and there is no speech nor language where Thy voice is not heard." All these are pastoral images, drawn from the scenery surrounding the young shepherd; thus also, if Moses was the inspired author of the Pentateuch, especially of that noblest historical poem the Book of Geneses, and that extraordinary drama the Book of Job, we may well conceive these were written,

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not when he sat at the entrance of the Tabernacle giving laws to Israel, but rather when in the clefts of Horeb he kept the flocks of Jethro his father-in-law. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" then it is probable that *those* hands used the hammer, the adze, the saw; and has not this circumstance for ever and for ever hallowed the implements of labour? the consecration of the divinest life descends upon the humble workman; he can boast of hereditary honours, to which the wearers merely of the surplice, the alb, and the gown, the wielders of the crozier, and the readers of rubrics, can make no claim. "For by their occupation they were tent makers." Not merely the Master, but his apostles, and first disciples, belonged to the great fraternity of labour; thus, the most important names, Saviour, King, Law-Giver, Apostle, on the pages of sacred literature, combined with their great functions the toil of the body as well as the exercise of the mind. And to a large extent the same rule seems to hold in prophane as in sacred literature. Homer was unquestionably a worker; coming to later days,

"Richest Shakspear was a poor man's child."

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the greatest of all poets was a Wool Comber; was wont to prepare his bags of wool for market, and cheapen them in the streets of Stratford-upon-Avon. Many of the finest ancient Poets were of the ranks of labour and the poor. All these instances are proof enough of the impossibility of divorcing these two; efforts innumerable have been made to divorce them. A certain degradation has been made to hang about the idea of work; the world has now an idea in its crotchety head that work is disgraceful—that swords, pens, or easy chairs, are the only honourable things—that spades, ploughs, hammers, are all dishonourable things; the idea floats about that it is elegant to be idle, to appear full dressed, to walk through the world as through a ball-room, or a saloon: that it is most inelegant to plead guilty to the crime of dirty fingers, or hard hands, or to the ignoble acquaintance with forges, factories, or threshing floors. Now, before any man can be a true man, he must be cured of that insanity, he must learn that the dishonourable thing is to manage to skulk through the world without working; and the attempt of this little book is to show that mental labour may very frequently combine nobly with manly labour,

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and that in illustration of this it is noticeable that there have been many men confined to the loom, to the flail, and the hammer, whose intellectual attainments have been amazing, and who from the various departments they have worthily filled, have added to the stores and treasures of their country's genius and intellectual worth.

The Divine Life in the Workshop! that is our idea, ours is not the first age that has beheld in the workshop the attempt and struggle after divine life; and surely the world beholds no spectacle more sublime than this,—the poor man hungering after the imperishable bread—and amidst his woes and sorrows labouring not merely for the perishable tabernacle: but for the imperishable and deathless spirit. The deeper the gloom, the darker the hut, the more crowded the workshop from whence man aspires, the nobler the aspiration;—The Divine Life—the life of the intellect, the life of the soul in the workshop: it is not difficult to live that life in the study, in the quiet retreat, in the silence of the independent solitude: but amidst the barking of the wild dogs of Want, Exhaustion, and Pain; with sad memories hanging over the past life, and a sad future

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frowning before—in the workshop, amidst unsympathising and dissolute comrades; while the sweat streams from the brow,—while the sense of injustice pleads strongly and potently within,—while the feeling that the fair day's wage is not given for the fair day's work, takes all the zest and the pleasure from the toil: the Divine Life there—the divine life attempted and realized among such hinderances as these—yet, it is done, and when it is done, when such a life is realized in veracity and faithfulness, what a sermon is given to the world. Sermons preached in an old cathedral, or church, or chapel, by any hierarchy or sectary whatever, are, indeed poor and powerless, compared with it; the tools of the man's toil shine like the insignia and regalia of the disguised angel. He, who from the difficulties of his situation, clears the road, and makes the pathway to the spiritual life, comes among his fellows like a prophet. He is clad with wings, he is armed with superior powers, he is venerated, spite of his rags—spite of his hardships; nay, if he has struggled through all, and "held fast faith," and "kept his memory green"—he is honoured for the very trials through which he has passed—he is known as the

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strong man,—although he has not materially bettered his condition on earth. He "has the better and more enduring substance;" for this divine life is the noblest, and the most perenial: after all, it is, indeed, the only life—other life is but the shadow and the show—the life of the affections, the intellect, the taste, the religion, is immortal. What a world of Poetry lies folded up in the very idea of Labour! All the tales of old magicians and sorcerers are outdone by the history of its achievements. Labour is indeed the good Genius turning everything into gold—its triumphs form the noblest lyric of Humanity; for Labour is a great Epic Poet—it is a mighty world-battle and conquest. What a triumph to evolve from causes the most remote consequences of the highest importance. Labour touches the most worthless substances, and converts them into forms the most beautiful—the weeds of the sea, the granite of the old Cornish rock, the refuse of the soil, all become the means of the welfare of man by the charmed touch of Labour and Industry. The uncouth iron, through what a variety of wonderful and graceful transformations is it made to pass, from the rearing of a crystal palace to the making of

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a surgeon's knife. From the stem of a tree what graceful forms and festoons are elaborated by Labour; how the hard mahogany and the stern and tough old oak seem to give up the battle, willing ever, as a pliant husband, to bow any way for peace. Labour makes everything tributary to it, and channels and cuts a path-way through the most apparently impassable roads; the eye can rest upon no spot in the avenues of civilization but it is a compliment to Labour; and the whole world is a workshop, and Man's five fingers are given him as tools to labour therein. Magicians, wizards, warlocks; what are they to the five fingers of Man? the mind thrills and trembles, the breast heaves with the bare majesty and sublimity of the idea.

THE HAND!—what a Poem is there—the Hand! God's delegated missionary to the earth, for without it the world could never have been conquered;—in savage or in refined scenes, while the brain has been the study, the Hand has been the laboratory of our race. In the rude realm of the first Aboriginal children of Nature, the hand tore down the branches from the trees, and twisted them into the first rough shelter from the summer's heat, or the pelting of the winter's storm. The hand of Tubal Cain tore

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the first stones from the rock, the first iron from the mine; and his hand, first of a long descending line, struck the hammer on the anvil and shaped the tough metal at last, so obediently to his will, that the loud and astounded cheers of the multitude chimed in chorus with his laughter, till they bowed before him as a God, and worshipped him as a Vulcan. The keys of the first instrument of music, and the wires of the first harp, the fingers twisted them, and then unlinked the hidden chains of harmony slumbering in their recesses—trumpet or timbrel to rouse the host for battle, or to receive the returning thousands with the wreath and the dance. The hand cut down the tree—the hand shaped out the canoe—the hand of the brave man launched away, while the shivering cowards stood trembling and wondering on the beach. What is all Civilization and Progress, but a testimony to the powers of the human Hand. If we needed any strong and mighty confirmation of God in Nature and Man, surely it is furnished in the adaptation of this most powerful and wonderful instrument. Now, when a person walks through the streets of a city, and thinks of all the bloodless triumphs which the Hand of Labour has achieved—

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there, when his eye is everywhere saluted by the productions of human art, and the inventions and discoveries of human skill—when he beholds sails from his looms whitening over distant seas—palaces, of his construction, gracefully rising around him—laces and silks, of his fabrication, robing round the forms of proud beauties—the railway, winding like a mighty serpent, and bearing the hissing Titan on its back; and the ship, like a mighty sea bird, ruffling her plumage over the waters—the gas lamps, stretching away like fairy lamps round Oberon's palace—the printing press for the author—the rostrum for the orator—the optic glass for the philosopher, and all prepared by the fingers of Labour—then, the greatness of Labour, its magnificence and its meaning begin to be understood—then it is seen that the only inelegant being in the universe is the idle Man. How, we say, does he manage to live, moral blister that he is, upon society? It is a wonder that he does not hide his head for very shame. If any man would commit suicide, that, we think, would be the man. The idle man in a world when forests are ringing with the sound of hammers and falling trees, and the cheerful songs of woodmen, when the blast of the

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miner is heard far down in the cave, or in excavations beneath the bed of the old ocean, when, from prairie heights and vast mountain fastnesses, the shouts of gathering populations swell, and chaunt, and roll on like the live thunder of Humanity to the plains below. The history of Labour is a noble, triumphal song; the children of Labour have moved ever beneath a triumphal arch. From Labour of some kind or other date all the aristocracies of the world; labour has made all the capital in the world; labour employs all the capital in the world. The time can never come when we shall cease to labour. We trust the time is rapidly coming when labour will cease to be a curse.

What then, in a word, is it that Labour does? It crystalises ideas; it makes the speculations of Mind material. Herein is its value; this is its work. Mind is the loom, out of which has been spun all the wonderful vesture of things which we behold; the world with all its pomp and retinue of splendour—the heaven fretted with golden fires, and the waterfall and the rock, the cloudlet and the fountain, and the round earth, and all they that dwell thereon. All these were in the Divine

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mind before they existed there, where, now, they exist in the sublime and beautiful forms of the outer world; and so of everything we see of human handicraft and workmanship. Time was when it existed only in the brain of some shrewd thinker, and he took it thence and crystalized it for us in iron, wood, porcelain, and stone. The Apollo Belvidere is but a petrified thought; so is this pair of snuffers which I now hold in my hands. Raphael's Virgin and Child,—and this Box of Lucifer Matches, even, in its degree, is a mental petrifaction too. The Hammer, the Nail, the Table, the Chair, the Brick, the Boat, St. Peter's at Rome, and the Pyramids of Egypt; this is the fact about the history of every one of them—they all are illustrations of man's power to catch the fleeting thought, and to print it legibly, durably, for thousands of years.

Mind, indeed, rules all;—the Hand could not do without the Mind, but neither could the Mind without the Hand: Mind gives the conception and the plan, but the Hand gives to the Mind execution and durability; in fact, in our true sense men could be neither Literature nor Labour, without both of these in combination. How is it that in the course of these latter ages

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these two have diminished their respect for each other? The Head has said to the Hand, "I have no need of thee;" and the Hand has said to the Head, "I have no need of thee." How is it that these two, who ought to be indissoluble friends, have been thus disunited? The Political Economist, indeed, speaks of the Producing Classes; he cuts off from this appellation all the children of Genius—all the Poets, Historians, and Men of Science. Yet, indeed, the Man of Genius produces all. A man like Sir Walter Scott, for instance, affects the whole material condition of a country; to say nothing of his contributions to the refining manners and the improving tastes of the country, he increases its resources; he creates a demand for its material productions. As the wonderful creations come teeming forth from his prolific mind, men must read them; reviews, poems, they will read them, here and in America, and over the whole of Europe, by hundreds of thousands: thus lead is demanded for types, and foundries for casting; the paper mill is employed,—the printer is set to work; artists, engravers, binders, and all these persons must live. Thus one man may, by his own force of genius, be the means of giving employment to

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hundreds of thousands of men, through successive generations. Thus, then, we must widen and liberalise the term Labour: we must extend the meaning of the term, the Labouring Classes. The Working Classes, the Industrious Classes, the Self-educated Classes, are all very ambiguous terms, and none of them convey precisely the idea we would wish to convey. All, it may be said, in one sense—all who give to Society any value in return for their existence in it, or for the protection they derive from it—all must labour; some with the hand, some with the head, some with the foot. There are some men, we know, who sit in inglorious idleness, neither sowing nor reaping, but employing a whole world, it may be, to serve them. Such men—moral blisters, or rather contagious beings as they are, do yet benefit some way; but they are not to be included in the grand ranks of the Labouring Classes. But the man who really has work to do is a Labourer; he may be a lucifer-match maker, or a street sweeper; he may be a surgeon, and may set broken bones; a physician, and by his knowledge of chemical properties and substances, and their relation to human bodies, he may lengthen human life; he may be a carpenter, or a mason; he may be

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a contractor, or a merchant; he may be a captain, and walk the quarter-deck—or he may be a sailor before the mast; he is a Productive Labourer. He may be a poet, like Wordsworth, or Scott; a novelist, like Dickens; a clergyman, like Dr. Arnold. He may popularise philosophical subjects, as a lecturer; he may fill a chair in an university;—he is a Productive Labourer. He is adding to the amount of social wealth; he is increasing the amount of social confidence; he is adding to the proportion of social intelligence; he is lending firmness to the guarantees of social rectitude, by his sagacity and wisdom—by his probity and consistency—by his perseverance and courage: he is a Social Labourer. It is not sufficiently remembered that if a man work worthily in any way, as a minister of public instruction, he is really a worker, although not spoken of as popularly belonging to the Labouring Class.

But when we speak of the Labouring Class, we do attach to it a distinct meaning and idea, and we mean by it, for the most part, not merely those whose lives are devoted to Labour, but who toil upon these pursuits which are indispensable to the very sustenance and foundation of society; who plod in the

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field behind the plough; who harrow and dig; who delve in the mine; who fell the tree; who excavate the road; who weave and knit; who build and hew; who win the stone from the quarry, and the metal from the fire;—in fine, who prepare the raw material for society—who make the city or the village; the climbers of the ladder, the constructors of the scaffold; this class has been looked upon with contempt by their brother workers; they have been little more than the serfs of the social system—the carriers of the human race; they have been regarded as only ignorant and debased by the other orders of society. In battle, from this class have sprung the soldiers, the main body of those who perished in the field; in peace they have borne the principal burden of the taxation imposed by the wars. If it had not been for these men, and such as these, there could have been no civil state. "The King himself is served from the field,"—yet their elevation has been very slow indeed. By the webs woven through a series of ages, they have been kept in bondage; and very few, indeed, believe that from this order have ever sprung any of those who have possessed intelligence or moral power: yet, from the lowly valleys of Humi-

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liation and Poverty have ascended those who, in every walk of life, have conferred the most lasting and important obligations on the world. From those valleys came legislators who conferred upon nations the wisest laws—prophets, who uttered the augury of the future—poets, who chaunted the most stirring and inspiring songs, —sages, who uttered the truths of highest wisdom—philosophers, who read deeply the mystery and the meaning of nature.

There is an affecting anecdote told of our distinguished experimental philosopher, Dr. Farrady, whose poverty in his early years was very great. The first electrifying machine he ever had, stood in an optician's window, price four shillings and sixpence, but he was quite unable to purchase it. He passed it many times—he stood and gazed at it, lamenting his poverty, not because it subjected him to bodily inconveniences, but because it threatened to exclude him from the paths of science; but he denied himself the common necessaries of life—he did accumulate four shillings and sixpence, and he purchased the treasure. This was his sole assistance in his first attempts at scientific attainment. The estimation in which he learned to regard it may be conceived; he parted with

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it, however, to Sir James South; before this, it was seldom from his eyes; he valued it as a memorial of difficulties conquered. Sir Robert Peel proposed his name for the pension of 300*l*, but going out of office before the pension was fairly settled, the question was left for the decision of the Whig Cabinet, by Lord Melbourne himself. Farrady was insulted with some questions upon matters of party politics and his inclination to whiggism, upon which he said,

"My Lord, I will not only not accept this pension, I will not take one from any Cabinet of which your Lordship is a member." The Philosopher was in a fair way to lose his annuity, when Lady Mary Fox saw the four and sixpenny electrical machine at Sir James South's; she heard the history of it, and repeated it to the king, with the outline of Farrady's life. The king even shed tears. "That man deserves the pension Peel promised," said he; and Farrady was requested to accept the pension, not from the Cabinet, but from the king.

And this just illustrates the fact and the principle, that the most worthy positions in literature, or art, or science, have been attained

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by the exercise of labour; there is no royal road to any really worthy place or post. Mind is matured and made strong only by the patient, the persevering, the diligent exercise of all its powers. The city does not rise upon the waste, without labour, without the sound of hammers, and the voices of industry. So neither will Mind become vigorous without vigilant watchfulness and training. The most wealthy man who ever attained to any place of intellectual honour, did so by labour, equally with the humble being who fought with unnumbered difficulties in order that he might attain to some of the pleasures of knowledge, of refinement and taste. Bodily labour, too; the power of endurance sharpens the wit and energies of the mind, and calls its resources forth into activity and play. It is worth noticing that God has constructed the moral world upon the principle of labour—he has sent Man into a workshop—he has given him his ten fingers as the tools wherewith to work—he has not rained down upon man the pleasures and the charms of life, without demanding from him a proportionate degree of exercise, in order to obtain them. Some things lie near at hand; they are indispensable, and are therefore soon

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obtained: but other things, and things of permanent interest, lie more remote and distant, and the exertion to procure them is long and severe: thus the most valuable and important circumstance about every one of us, is our education—and that is a life-long business; and men who have been for many years at school, find themselves as far from the mark and standard of a perfect life, as when they begun the exercise and the discipline of the soul. Great things can only be purchased by great Labour. The actual time of the composition of Paradise Lost might be trifling compared with the magnificence of the production; but in fact the Poem was preparing and was writing the whole of the life, and when the Poet sat down deliberately to dictate his words, they came from the well-stored treasury of a life-time. The worth of our production must be in proportion to the labour bestowed upon it; no man has any right to expect that Chance will do for him what the ready hand, the shrewd eye, and the reflective brain, must do. Man must be intelligent for himself! vicarious intelligence, vicarious virtue, vicarious piety, are all now the forsaken chimeras of another day. We trust the time is rapidly passing away, when the

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influence of a so-called educated class was or is most potential and mighty in society. It is to be hoped that a merely educated class will become more and more rare among us, when education shall not be the property of a class, when the key of Knowledge shall not be as to a great degree, even at present it is, in the possession of few—when Knowledge shall no longer be looked upon as the Mystery maker—but the mystery destroyer. The fearful mental darkness in which men are held by ignorance and superstition, interferes with the most precious privilege of man—his mental freedom. The most important principles of man's life are handed over to the keeping of corporate bodies; the soul to the priests—the body to the doctors—the social order to the lawyers. In a purer state of society will not such men be desirous of disseminating their knowledge, and becoming popular illustrators and demonstrators of the truth and light within them? But a great number of the lowly classes have even thought themselves unfit for mental illumination; so far removed have they been from any thing like self-reliance, that they have feared to be trusted with the lamp of Truth and of Knowledge: and have feared that they would

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not know how to use the Book and the Pen. And then the idea has been to many a favourite one, that even if a certain measure of instruction might be given to certain classes, yet, there were, and are things, which they are wholly unable to apprehend: to read, to write, to cast accounts, all these are very well. But not for a moment should it be supposed that the working man can tremble before the majesty of the marble, or melt before the touching beauty of the canvass, or think beneath the tenderness of the poetic line. The Standard—the idea of mental training should be exalted, it should be placed on a nobler pedestal. Now, by such illustrations as those following, the people may, perhaps, learn to respect themselves, when they behold the noble names associated with the great work of Labour. Proofs these, that Genius is not the child of any class, or school, that its irrepressible fires will burn forth in the breast of the shepherd, among the cold, bleak, northern mountains, tending his sheep—will carol in the heart of the poor Manchester operative at his loom, as truly as it will chasten and humble the spirit of the student, on the banks of the Cam and the Isis;

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or hang visions of pastoral beauty before the eyes of the poor child of nobility, born amidst all the tameness of Pall Mall, or St. James's, or opening his eyes first amidst the cold Horror of Vienna or Petersburg.

Labour and literature are not incompatible. The labouring body was intended to maintain the literary spirit, not only in the society and the race, but in every individual of that race; that life is false and wrong, in which the spiritual is so beaten down and lost that the rude material body presses its attention every where, and demands and receives all attention. Labour was intended but to warm and give life to the spiritual in man; like a fuel, to be a means of scattering the genial rays of friendly heat over the spirit's abode; but now, alas! the fuel rages like the fire of an incendiary, and threatens to consume the entire spirit in its flame, and many have at last grown to the conviction that the two could not exist in neighbourhood together; they have proclaimed a divorce between the two; what God commanded to exist together they have put asunder. It has not always been so. Biography records the instances of many noble-minded persons who made the body obedient to the will of the mind. No young

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man's library is complete without those three volumes published by Mr. Knight, called "The Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties;" in these, some of the miraculous efforts of mental industry are detailed, and it is impossible to read without catching some portion of the inspiration breathed forth from lives so heroic, and many of them so divine. If we read the purpose of life aright, then it is surely the case that mind should reign supreme. The body has only the same temporary importance attached to the building of some illustrious tenant —and most buildings derive their importance, not from themselves, but from the dignity and character of the proprietor. Now, when labour for the body, to feed it, to pamper it, to dress it, is made the staple consideration of life, is there not plainly an inversion of all the true ends of life? It is desirable to have a sound body as it is desirable to live in a sound house, not for itself, but for the sake of the tenant; but generally, the very measures which are taken to obtain such a building for the soul are defeated; the body, indeed, fares sumptuously, but the soul is oppressed with the superincumbent weight of sense and all its myriad sensualities. To bring about a better state of things can we

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appeal to the principle of emulation? can we exhibit the names of some of the worthy—and of others of the most lofty, who have known the pursuits of toil; who have combined in some degree, the spiritual and the material? Some of these illustrations are quaint and curious, others are, as Dominie Sampson would say, "prodigious;" some exhibit a quiet, still life, common sense nature, not ranging to any high ambitions, not reaching forward to any lofty idea of being: others present the picture of a soul struggling in toils it could not comprehend, and vexing itself beneath the agony of its own imperfection. Some lives, devoted to labour and to literature in combination, show, after all, much more worldly prudence than genius; and some again, develope a genius so strong, that it shook from it all the pleadings of worldly prudence, and hugged a darling poverty of the body to the highly endowed and wealthy soul. We do not advocate the disjuncture of Genius and Prudence; they are as compatible as Literature and Labour: the reflective nature will be cautious not to plunge itself or its dependents in the vortexes of woe, which have been the too frequent terminations to the efforts of the literary life.

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There is a kind of Biography little known, little read, and yet interesting in the highest degree, from its simple and unaffected delineation of the lives and manners of secluded energetic men, who were only known in the domains of humble life; but whose history, nevertheless, abounded in interesting incidents—not more interesting, perhaps, than those which happen in the lives of most men, but which happened to men who were gifted to observe, to note, and to relate such particulars. The life of THOMAS GENT, of York, of which Dr. Southey gives an outline in the "Doctor," is full of homely melodramatic character; it is an excellent panorama of the ancient City of York, and realizes to the reader's mind the home life of that day; it was a romance of life, too; born in Dublin, though of English extraction, he ran away from his apprenticeship, as a printer, on account of the brutal usage he received from his master. After some employment, as a printer in London, his life admits us into some curious and striking particulars of the state of the Press, and of Liberty, at that time—the beginning of the seventeenth century; but, obtaining a situation at York, in the office of Mr. White,

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King's printer for five counties, (there were few printers in England, Gent assures us at that time out of London)—"None, I am sure, at Chester, Liverpool, Whitehaven, Kendal, Preston, Manchester, and Leeds." The offer from his new place was eighteen pounds a-year, with board, washing, and lodging, and a guinea to bear his charges on the road. "Twenty shillings of this I offered," he says, "to Crofts, the carrier, a very surly young fellow as ever I conversed with, but he would have five or six shillings more."

One cannot but stop to wonder how this surly fellow, Crofts, would admire being pinned thus like a buzzing cockchafer to the page of friend Gent, without even the power of a remonstrative grunt, yet but for this surly insistment upon overcharges, he had passed altogether out of sight, and his name by no mortal pronounced more. Gent was not at all daunted.

"Finding him so stiff with me, I resolved to venture on foot. He set out with his horses on Monday, and the next morning, being the 20th of April, 1714, I set forward, and had not, I think, walked three miles, when a gentleman's servant, with a horse ready saddled, and himself riding another, overtook me, and

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for a shilling, with a glass or so on the road, allowed me to ride with him as far as Caxton, which was the period of his journey."

He reached York about twelve o'clock on the Sunday following, and finding the way to Mr. White's house, the door was opened by Mrs. White's head maiden, Alice Grey. Ah! Thomas! Thomas! She ushered him into a room, where Mrs. White lay ill in bed; but the old gentleman was at his dinner by the fireside, sitting in a noble arm-chair, with a good large pie before him, and made him partake heartily with him.

"I had a guinea in my shoe lining, which I pulled out to ease my foot, at which the old gentleman smiled, and said, it was more than he had ever seen a journeyman save before."

A prudent man, Thomas Gent; he continued here very happily for twelve months, and then he determined to visit his friends in Dublin.

"But what made my departure somewhat uneasy, I scarce then well knew how, was through respect for Mrs. Alice Guy, the young maiden who I said first opened the door to me, who I was persuaded to believe had the like mutual fondness to me; she was the daughter of Mr. Richard Guy, schoolmaster, at Ingleton,

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Lancashire, with very good natural parts, quick understanding, fine complexion, and very amiable in her features."

But Thomas was a backward wooer. He was very ambitious.

"My heart could not slight so lovely a young creature, as to pretend I had no esteem for her charms, which had captivated others, and particularly my master's grandson, Mr. Charles Bourne, who was more deserving than any. However, I told her (because my irresolution should not anticipate her advancement) that I should respect her as one of the dearest of friends; and receiving a little dog from her as a companion on the road, I had the honour to be accompanied as far as Bramham Moor with my rival."

Poor Alice! Gent was obliged to leave Ireland to prevent his being seized by his former master. He travelled to London, and generally seems successful in business, for he was thrifty and prudent; but always exhibits adherence to the true and noble affections, cautious as he was. After he had accepted an offer of a partnership in Norwich, he relinquished it, because but a few hours afterwards, there came a mournful letter from his parents, saying that

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they were very infirm, and extremely desirous to see him before they died. He returned to England again; but his courtship was managed in a most dilatory manner; indeed, we never hear of any correspondence at all. Yet said his mother, "Aye, Tommy, this English damsel of yours, I suppose, is the chiefest reason why you slight us and your native country." But Tommy made the heart of his English damsel sick with hope long deferred.

"I had little money, and no certain home whereto to invite her. I knew she was well fixed; and it pierced me to the heart to think, if through any miscarriage or misfortune, I should alter her condition for the worse instead of the better. I imagined that things would so fall out, that after some little time I should have occasion to invite my dear to London."

Poor Alice! A little while yet, and she had been engaged to Thomas ten years. At last—

"One Sunday morning, as my shoes were japanning by a little boy at the end of the lane, there came Mr. John Hoyle, who had been a long time in a messenger's custody, on suspicion, for reprinting *Vox Populi Vox Dei*.

"'Mr. Gent,' said he, 'I have been to York

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to see my parents, and am but just, as it were, returned to London. I am heartily glad to see you, but sorry to tell you that you have lost your old sweetheart; for I assure you that she is really married to your rival, Mr. Bourne.'

"I was so thunderstruck that I could scarcely return an answer. My own remissness that had occasioned it, and withal that she could not in such a case be blamed for mending her fortune—all these threw me into a very deep concern."

He consoled himself by writing ballads, which, although impoverished enough in poetry, were very popular. He heard occasionally from York, and both Mrs. Alice Bourne and her husband enquired frequently after him, and this consoled him, "although," says he, "I now must never expect to behold my first love at York, though I was sensible that Mr. Bourne, though a very likely young man, was not one of the most healthful persons; but far from imagining otherwise than that he might have outlived me, who then was worn to a shadow." Gent's life in London is, however, not merely the chronicle of his love griefs; he saw much of the tyranny and censorship exercised over the press, and gives a lengthy account of young

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Mathews, whom he saw drawn on a hurdle to execution, for printing a treasonable paper, although he was but nineteen years of age. He seems also, himself, to have been somewhat of a treasonable printer; he gives a curious narrative of his printing some papers in vindication of a clergyman committed to the King's Bench. When printed, the papers were packed up, and his master hiring a coach, they were driven to Westminster, and ushered into a spacious hall, where they were placed near a large table, on which was a carpet of curious workmanship, and presently a bottle of wine for our entertainment. "We were presently visited by a grave person, in a lay habit, who entertained us with one pleasant discourse or other. He bad us be secret, "for," said he, "the imprisoned divine does not know who is his defender, and if he did, I know his temper, in a sort of transport he would reveal it, and so I should be blamed for my good offices."

"'You need not fear me, sir,' said my master.'

"'And I, good sir,' added I, 'you may be less afraid of; for I protest I do not know where I am, much less your person; nor heard where I should be driven, or if I shall not be

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driven to Jerusalem before I get home again.'

"For my part I was ever inclined to secresy and fidelity, and therefore I was nowise inquisitive concerning our hospitable entertainer. But, happening afterwards to behold a state prisoner in a coach, guarded from Westminster to the Tower, God bless me, thought I, it was no less than the Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Atterbury, by whom my master and I had been treated."

But while Gent was going through a variety of strange adventures, imprisoned on suspicion of treasonable printing—having his types, when he became a master, seized upon: domestic matters were re-arranging for him.

"See again," he says, "the wonderful effects of Divine Providence in all things. It was one Sunday morning that Mr. Philip Wood, a *quondam* clerk at Mr. Midwinter's, entered my chambers, where I used to employ him, too, when slack of business in other places.

"'Tommy,' said he, 'all these fine materials of yours must be moved to York.'

"'Aye,' said he, 'and you must go too, without it's your own fault; for your first sweetheart is now at liberty, and left in good circumstances by her dear spouse, who deceased but of late.

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"'I pray heaven,' answered I, 'that his precious soul may be happy, and, for aught I know, it may be as you say; for, indeed, I think I may not trifle with a widow, as I have formerly done with a maid.'

"I took leave of all at the Black Swan, in Holborn, where I had paid my passage in the stage coach, which brought me to York in four days' time. Here I found my dearest once more, though much altered from what she had been about ten years before that I had not seen her. There was no need of new courtship; but decency suspended the ceremony of marriage for some time, till my dearest, considering the ill consequences of delay in her business, as well as all the former ties of love that passed between us, by word and writing, gave full consent to have the nuptials celebrated and performed."

Accordingly, they were, in the "stately Cathedral," the very day of Archbishop Blackburn's installation. Is not this a little romance, too, from real life?

Thomas Gent was a very extraordinary man; he composed and compiled many famous histories of ancient and modern localities; was a famous collector of antiquities; and when, in

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January, 1839, the Ouse, at York, was frozen over, he set up a press on the ice, and printed names there, to the great satisfaction of young gentlemen, ladies, and others, who paid very liberally on the occasion. His most interesting book is the recently discovered "Autobiography;" and its value is not only for the pleasant story of Alice Guy, but the air of reality with which it throws open to us the memories and the manners of the times. The Literary Labours of Thomas Gent were very numerous. He wrote a history of York, and histories of Greece and Rome, and many other books seldom met with; perhaps, not remarkable for any great literary power, but developing reading, if not erudition; and great patience, if not great genius.

Another memorable instance of worthy Biography in the silence of obscure life, although somewhat better known, must be recorded here—it is the chronicle of Wonderful Robert Walker, the Minister of Seathwaite, in Westmoreland. His memory has been perpetuated and drawn from the isolation of his lonely hills principally by the works of Wordsworth—the most affecting illustrations of poetry, and romantic benevolence, and heroism, never

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equalled the simple annals of this remarkable man. He was born in the year 1709; being the youngest and weakest of twelve children, he was, therefore, *bred* a scholar, as it was termed, and in due time became the schoolmaster of his native parish. In this situation he qualified himself to take priest's orders, and was inducted into the curacy of Seathwaite, the value of which living was *five pounds per annum*, with a cottage attached to it. Poor Robert had nothing to commence housekeeping with; but he married an exemplary young woman, who had, by her frugality, saved 40*l*., and with this they commenced life together. Severe was the long struggle of that life, but it was noble, and it was triumphant.

Robert Walker travelled over the great globe of duty, and he seems to have been everywhere faithful. The whole circle of human life-writing does not record an instance of a life in which were combined the most opposite qualities—prudence, generosity, calmness, and enthusiasm. When, in consequence of the poverty of his living, the Bishop of Chester recommended the scheme of joining the curacy of Ulpha to the contiguous one of Seathwaite, and the nomination was offered to Mr. Walker,

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a very unexpected difficulty occurred—no other than the refusal of the poor man, for whose benefit the union was intended.

He "declined any attempt to the curacy of Ulpha," he said, "because I was always apprehensive it might be disagreeable to my auditory, at Seathwaite, as they have always been accustomed to double duty."

The curacy of Ulpha would have more than doubled his poor living, without giving him any additional trouble. He was assiduous in teaching the young of his flock: to this work he devoted eight hours every day, during five days of the week, and the half of Saturday.—His seat was within the rails of the altar of the church, and the communion-table was his desk; and while the children repeated their lessons by his side, the master employed himself at the spinning-wheel; and at night, by the fire, if not otherwise engaged, while giving to his family the lessons of wisdom and virtue, the spinning-wheel was also in requisition, and constantly active. He was also the scrivener for his whole parish; and during some periods of the year he was compelled to sit up often, whole nights, employed on petitions, wills, or deeds of conveyance. He tilled his own garden.

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He had the right of pasturage on the mountains for a few sheep, and a cow or two, and he rented a few acres of land. Nor did he scorn the humblest drudgery; for he assisted his neighbours in haymaking, and shearing their flocks; he spun in his own family all the woollen cloths needed for their use; he made the lights for his own cottage of the pith of rushes dipped in any unctuous substance. But although his life was thus bound to the most rigid round of the most homely pursuits, the mind and the affections did not suffer. His generosity was extraordinary. On the Sabbath he provided a plain repast for all those who came from a distance to his church, and chose to partake of his hospitality. His love of Nature was intense and ardent. He was a shrewd observer: and was wont to take his children out into the fields, and amuse and instruct them with the description of fossil, plant, and insect. He gave to his children very superior education, and fitted one for the Church by maintaining him in Trinity College, Dublin. His preaching and conversation, although so little the result of what is called education, is described as being chaste and pure—fervid and eloquent. His power of endurance must have been ex-

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traordinary. He sat up very late, and rose very early; and when all the family had retired to rest, he withdrew to a little chamber on the roof: he had slated it, and fitted up shelves for his books, wearing apparel, and his utensils; there, many a cold winter's night, whilst the roof was glazed with ice, did he remain, reading or writing, till the day dawned: and when in the winter he taught his children in the church, in that cold damp place he never had a fire.—He used to send his children in parties to his own fire, or make them run up the mountain side. Such was the life pursued by Wonderful Robert Walker, till his ninetieth year closed over him. He then suffered the final shock of his life in the death of his aged partner. She was the counterpart of himself. Her character is summed up by one who knew her. She was no less excellent than her husband: she was good to the poor; she was good to everything. When she died, he ordered that her body should be borne to the grave by three of her daughters, and one granddaughter; and when the corpse was lifted from the threshold, he insisted on lending his aid; and feeling about—for he was then almost blind—took hold of a napkin fixed to the coffin, and, as a

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bearer of the body, entered the chapel, a few steps from the lowly parsonage. From this time all his powers fainted: he never preached with steadiness again; he was always looking at the seat she used. He never passed her tomb without tears: he was kind and good-humoured with friends, but sad and melancholy when alone.

"He went to bed at twelve o'clock the night before his death as his custom was. He went tottering and leaning on his daughter's arm to examine the heavens, and meditate a few moments in the open air. 'How clear the moon shines to-night.' He said these words, sighed, and laid down. At six, next morning, he was found a corpse. Many a tear, and many a heavy heart, and many a grateful blessing followed him to the grave."

A lengthy account of this remarkable man is given in the fourth volume of Wordsworth's Works, and in the course of his Poems reference is made to him several times. But obscure as his position was, so in comparative obscurity he yet remains; yet his name glorifies obscurity, and perhaps, the instance is not so rare as it seems. In many dark, and unknown nooks, great and magnanimous deeds

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are performed. Many a region of still life is illustrated with unostentatious goodness. The greatest virtue does not blaze forth to the admiration of the public eye; it frequently passes away altogether unknown, and unacknowledged beyond its own neighbourhood, till some stray gold dust floats down before the eye and guides it to a mine of moral wealth and worth.

We have preserved to us one name, from far back, in a very early period of our country's history. In the old Saxon days of the land, one of the very earliest poets of our English soil was a ploughman—Cedmon the Ploughman. Where Whitby is now, a village stood then. The old Abbey, whose ruins now stand so desolate, hanging over the sea, was then known as the Monastery of Streoneshalh: there the Lady Hilda, whose name is so well associated with poetry, and history, and romance, reigned over the little community of monks and nuns. And in the village lived a poor herdsman, Cedmon. To an advanced age he lived, and never gave evidence of any poetic gift or faculty. He could not even sing a song; and when on the occasion of any gathering of his neighbours or friends, when the song was sung,

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and the harp was made to exercise its melody, if there seemed any probability that it would come round to him, he invariably rose and went away, for fear of exposing his ignorance. Those were days when the belief in the supernatural ruled all, and the extraordinary event was ever the production of miraculous machinery. "One evening," says the old chronicle, "when he had left an entertainment and retired to the stalls, for on that night he had to take care of the oxen, he laid himself down to rest, and fell asleep; and a figure appeared to him, and said, "Cedmon, sing me something:" but he answered "I cannot sing; and I have come hither from the feast because I cannot sing;" but the person replied, "You must sing to me." "What must I sing?" said Cedmon." "Sing the Beginning of the Creatures." And upon this, Cedmon began to sing some verses he had never heard, to the praise of God the Creator. When he awoke, the inspiration did not desert him; he remembered all that he had sung in his dream, and was able to compose several others besides, on the same subject. When in the morning he came into the presence of his master, who was the most considerable person in the village, he repeated these verses to him;

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and he was then introduced to the Abbess of the Monastery, the Lady Hilda, to whom he repeated his dream, and recited his verses. Then they recited to him a piece of Sacred History, desiring him to turn it into verse. He went home to his own house, and in the morning returned, with an excellent poem on the subject prescribed. At this time Cedmon could neither read nor write; but the Abbess, admiring and wondering at the gift of God manifested in him, now desired him to lay aside his secular habit, and to enter the monastery as a brother. Here he was taught among the brethren, and frequently became to them a teacher, for he translated a great portion of the Scriptures into Saxon verses And thus our ploughman poet had the honour of being one of the first to translate the words of Divine truth into the vernacular tongue. Will our readers like to look at a specimen of Cedmon's poetry, and the verse of that day? it is worth while to do so. For it is said, that even Milton not only read the poems of our herdsman, but adopted and incorporated in his Paradise Lost some of the sentiments and expressions. The following are the verses sung in the dream:—

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" Now we must praise
The heavenly Kingdom's Guardian;
The Creator's might.
And the thoughts of his mind;
Glorious Father of Works.
How he of every glory,
Eternal Lord,
Established the beginning.
He first framed
For the children of Earth
The heaven for a roof;
Holy Maker:
The middle region
Mankind's guardian.
The Lord Eternal
Afterwards made
A dwelling for men:
Almighty ruler."

The following verses are of a somewhat later day, probably when Cedmon had received some higher knowledge. They are a kind of paraphrase on the first verses of the Book of Genesis.

There was not then yet,
Except surrounding darkness,
Any thing made:
But the wide ground
Stood, deep and dim,
A stranger to the Lord;
Void and unprofitable:

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On this his eyes he glanced,
The powerful King of Peace,
And beheld the place
Destitute of joy.
He saw the dark clouds
Perpetually press
Black under the sky,
Desert and waste,
Until this world's creation
Thro' the Word was done
Of the King of Glory.
Here first made
The Eternal Lord,
Protector of all things,
Heaven and earth.
The sky he reared,
And this spacious land
He established
With strong power:
Almighty Ruler.
The earth was as yet
With grass not green;
With the ocean covered;
Perpetually black;
Far and wide
Desert ways."

Cedmon appears to have remained in the monastery many years, and continued also high in the respect of his brethren. His end was so peaceable that no one but himself perceived the approach of death. The lofty pile of

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buildings, of which the ruins are now remaining, were not at that time erected; and, doubtless, a monastery was but a rude collection of huts, or thatch-covered cottages. One of them was appropriated to the purpose of an hospital or infirmary, where the very weak and dying were usually lodged. One night Cedmon surprised the attendant upon this place by requesting him to prepare him a lodging there. At this time he did not seem to be dying, nor appear very ill; but, in compliance with his request, a place was prepared, and he was removed thither. There he conversed very cheerfully with those who were beside him until midnight, and then enquired if they had the Eucharist there, but they said, "What occasion is there for the Eucharist? You cannot be near death when you can talk thus pleasantly!' "However," said he, "bring me the Eucharist;" and then taking it into his hand, he asked if all their minds were at peace with him, without any ground of quarrel or enmity. They all replied they were in perfect friendship with him, and put to him a similar question in reference to themselves. "My children," said he, "I am in charity with all the servants of God." So he strengthened himself with the heavenly

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Viaticum, and prepared for his entrance upon another life. He enquired how near the hour was when the brethren should be called up to sing the midnight praises to the Lord. They replied, "It is not far off." "Well then," said he, "let us wait for that hour;" and "signing himself with the sign of the cross, he leaned his head on the pillow, and soon breathed his last in a gentle slumber?"

This is one of the first literary curiosities of the kind in our country—one of the first of the accounts of the combination of Literature and Labour, and few accounts can be more interesting; for the facilities for instruction and mental advancement must have been few indeed in those days. The monastery, however, wherever it might be situated, was a sort of asylum of Genius. There was a general watchfulness for hopeful spirits and contemplative minds, although there must have been extraordinary difficulty in breaking through the husks of ignorance and debasement which then closed over the minds of the serf and the thrall. The Mind was compelled to walk alone without even the aid of crutches to help it in its advancement; but, as in a later day, a ploughman in Scotland broke down, or rather bounded

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over the pale of intellectual distinction, and as since his time several in an inferior degree have performed the same feat, so in those very dark ages divine thoughts and minister-ings came to one of the sons of Toil by the very oxen's stall, and it was perceived, that humble, and in worldly lore ignorant as he was, the divine light shone through him. This heraldry was acknowledged, and the intellectual place conceded to him.

Cedmon is a precious relic of a dark time assuring us that, as in other ages, and in times nearer to our own, so then, the voice of Heaven was heard when it spoke through the lips of the wise man; and that he in that day was adjudged to be wise who could hold intercourse with himself, and humbly and reverently listen to the voices of Eternity as they uttered themselves to his soul. Some of our friends, who have lived the life of labour, did not, perhaps, imagine it was so. Then this inspiration of the soul of Toil was thought to be a modern thing—this elevation of the labouring herdman an event of later time. No! it has been an event of all times occasionally occurring. And here you see in the dark grey morning of the Historic day, it happens, King Alfred has re-

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corded the history of the poor poet of Whitby, and the memory of his labour; and his inspiration and his songs are ineffaceably written in the hieroglyphics and memorials of the time.*

There are few persons accustomed to curious reading who have not heard of "TAYLOR THE WATER POET." It is, indeed, a rare thing to behold a copy of his works complete. They have never been reprinted, and seldom collected; but that extraordinary bibliopolist and bibliographer, Dr. Southey, has, in some degree, familiarised his name and writings to the public several years since. In editing the Poems of John Jones, an old servant, he prefaced them with an account of self-educated, or uneducated poets and writers, and the account of Taylor is the most interesting portion of the volume.

Taylor was a man whom we should not be much disposed to hold up to modern emulation; he does not seem to have possessed any great share of self-respect, but his enterprise was extraordinary, and his life has about it all the

* Little more is known of Cedmon than is related above, but those who desire to see all that can be said of him may refer to my departed friend, Dr. Young's History of Whitby; to Sharon Turner's Anglo Saxons;—D'Israeli's Amenities; and Bede's Ecclesiastical History.

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romantic colourings of the age in which he lived. Some of the most important notices of the manners and customs of the people of London, and the country generally, are to be found scattered over his writings; and they abound in the vulgarities and conceits of the time, with a very ample interfusion of those more peculiar to himself.

John Taylor was born in Gloucestershire. It does not appear where, but it does appear that from his earliest days, he was a waggish character; for his first adventure in verse was to memorialise the strange misadventures of his schoolmaster, upon whom some of his neighbours played a wicked trick. The poor man was fond of new milk, and went to market for the purpose of buying a milch cow, but being rather short-sighted, and probably being better acquainted with books than cows, the seller (let us hope in sport, and not in roguery,) sold him a bull. Our good and unsuspecting pedagogue, Master Green, drove the animal contentedly home; nor did he discover the trick until he had called the maid to milk it. This mistake our hopeful John celebrated by appropriate rhyme; and in rhyme too he gives but a sorry account of himself and his attainments

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in knowledge. When of sufficient age he, by his own choice, was bound apprentice to a waterman. There was a wide difference between the watermen then and now. Admirably would it harmonise with his bold, hardy, and idle disposition; for it was a thriving calling. The number of those who lived by the oar in that day, between Windsor and Gravesend, Taylor estimates to have been forty thousand. Although coaches were known they were but seldom used, and, indeed, but rarely built: though, towards the close of Taylor's career, they became customary enough, and sad were the maledictions poured down upon all the luckless race of users, and of proprietors, by the watermen.

Writing of coaches he says, "If the curses of people that are wronged by them might have prevailed, sure, I think, the most part of them had been at the Devil many years ago. * * * I, myself, have been so served, that I have wished them all in the great breach, or in a light fire upon Hounslow Heath, or Salisbury Plain."

And there were many reasons besides for the decrease of the glory of the waterman's profession. Taylor, in the course of his verses,

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gives to us many accounts of the proclamations ordering noblemen to depart to their several counties, and interfering with the traffic on the Thames; of the sad misfortune of the players removing their houses to the Middlesex from the Surrey side of the water, where they played far remote from the Thames, and gathered together 3000 or 4000 people, who used to all spend their monies on the water. Hackney coaches, were, however, the crowning disaster! But Taylor would not, perhaps, suffer in an equal degree with others of his brotherhood. He certainly had a notoriety on the water; he was known to Royalty; was well acquainted with Ben Jonson, perhaps equally well with Shakspeare, though of this we have no evidence. At that time boatmen were as much expected to talk as the Venetian boatmen were expected to sing; and in the art of happy loquacity our rhymester surely excelled. His experience of the world had been great; for he had made no fewer than sixteen voyages in the Queen's ships, and he was in the expeditions under Essex at Cadiz and the Azores. He was also a diligent reader, and very few of those who are reading, or will read this account of him, know half of the books he enumerates here:—

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I *care* to get good books, and I take heed
And *care* what I do either write or read;
Though some through ignorance, and some through spite,
Have said that I can neither read nor write.
But though my lines no scholarship proclaim,
Yet I at learning have a kind of aim:
And I have gathered much good observations,
From many human and Divine translations;—
The Poet *Quid*, or (Ovid if you will,)
Being in English, much hath helpt my skill;
And Homer, too, and Virgil I have seen,
And reading them I have much bettered been.
Godfrey of Bulloyne, well by Fairfax done,
Du Bartas, that much love hath rightly won,
Old Chaucer, Sydney, Spenser, Daniel, Nash,
I dipt my finger when they used to wash.
As I have read these Poets, I have noted
Much good, which in my memory is quoted.
Of histories I have perused some store,
As no man of my function hath done more;
The Golden Legend I did overtoss,
And found the gold mixed with a deal of dross.
I have read Plutarch's Morals and his Lives,
And like a bee sucked honey from those hives;
Josephus of the Jews, Knowls of the Turks,
Martin's Aurelius, and Guetara's works,
Loyor, Grimstone, Montaigne, and Sactonius,
Aggrippa, whom some call Cornelius;
Grave Seneca, and Cambden, Purchas, Speed,
Old Monumental Fox and Holinshed;
And that sole Book of Books, which God hath given,—
The blest eternal Testaments of Heaven;
That I have read, and I with care confess
Myself unworthy of such happiness.

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Taylor's first book had a very odd name; he called it "Taylor's Water Work; or, the Sculler's Travels from Tyber to Thames. With his boat laden with a hotch-potch or gallimawfrey of Sonnets, Satires, and Epigrams; with an Inkhorn disputation betwixt a lawyer and a poet, and a quaterne of new catched Epigrams caught the last fishing tide: together with an addition of Pastoral Equivoques or the complaint of a Shepherd dedicated to neither Monarch, nor Miser, Kaiser, nor Caitiff, Palatine, nor Plebeian, but to great Mounsier Multitude, alias All, or every-one." The manner in which he published his books, which separately were of very great bulk, was to print them at his own cost, make presents of them, and then hope for some "sudden remuneration." The times were not very fastidious, and although this mode does not to us seem far removed from mendicity, there was then nothing either especially strange or contemptible in the method; both James I. and Charles I. seem to have been of the number of his patrons: and it is probable that on many occasions he was admitted to their presence. All his books had quaint and curious titles: thus we have one called, "A Navy of Ships and other vessels,

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that have the art to sail by land as well as by sea." The names of these vessels are "Lordship, Scholarship, Ladyship, Goodfellowship, Apprenticeship, Courtship, Friendship, Fellowship, Footmanship, Horsemanship, Worship, Suretyship, Woodmanship." His adventures helped his books, and his books his adventures; his life was full of them. The first he undertook was in the year 1616. He published an account of it with this title, "Taylor's Travels: three weeks', three days', and three hours' observations from London to Hamburgh, in Germany, amongst Jews and Gentiles; with descriptions of Towns and Towers, Castles and Citadels, Artificial Gallowses, and natural Hangmen. Dedicated for the present to the absent Odcombian, Knight-errant, Sir Thomas Coryat, Great Britain's error and the world's mistake." Another of his adventures was to travel on foot from London to Edinburgh, "not carrying any money to, or fro; neither begging, borrowing, or asking for meat, drink, or lodging." And of this he published an account in verse and prose, entitled "The Pennyless Pilgrimage; or, The Moneyless Perambulation of John Taylor, alias the King's Majesty's Water Poet."

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"I made my legs my oars, and rowed by land."

Thus says the Rhymer: this Penniless Pilgrimage gives us not only a very humorous account of his achievements, his deeds, and his adventures, but it also is instructive in reference to the social usages and observances of the time. However, the undertaking (which was for a wager) was not so hazardous, as it may, perhaps, seem to us: Taylor had a tolerably wide notoriety; he took with him his man, and a sumpter beast well victualled, for if he allowed himself no money, he yet laid in a good stock of provisions. Still they sometimes seem to have been nearly on the point of foundering, and when they reached Daventry on a wet, windy day, they met with such entertainment from the hostess of the Horse-shoe of that town, who had a great wart rampant on her nose, that they were obliged to leave her

——"to hobble seven miles more,
The way to Dunchurch foul, with dirt and mire,
Able I think both man and horse to tire.
On Dunsmore heath, a hedge doth there enclose
Grounds on the right hand; there I did repose;
Wit's whetstone, Want, then made us quickly learn,

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With knives, to cut down rushes and green fern,
Of which we made a field bed in the field,
Which sleep, and rest, and much content did yield;
There with my mother Earth, I thought it fit
To lodge.
My bed was curtained with good wholesome airs,
And being weary, I went up no stairs;
The sky my canopy; bright Phœbus shined—
Sweet bawling Zephyrus breathed gentle wind.
In heaven's star-chamber I did lodge that night:
Ten thousand stars me to my bed did light.
There barricadoed with a bank lay we—
Below the lofty branches of a tree,
These my bedfellows and companions were—
My man, my horse, a bull, four cows, two steer:
But yet, for all this most confused rout
We had no bed staves, yet we fell not out.
Thus Nature, like an ancient free upholster,
Did furnish us with bedstead, bed, and bolster:
And the kind skies—for which high Heaven be thanked—
Allowed us a large covering and a blanket."

He proceeded the next day, "through plasters, puddles, thick, thin, wet, and dry," to Coventry, and was there entertained by Dr, Holland, known to literature as a translator. Another of his disastrous days following closely upon this visit, is thus related—

"That Wednesday I a weary way did pass—
Rain, wind, stones, dirt, and dabbling, dewy grass;

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With here and there a pelting scattered village,
Which yielded me no charity or pillage;
For all the day, nor yet the night that followed,
One drop of drink I'm sure my gullet swallowed.
At night I came to a stony town, called Stone,
Where I knew none, nor was I known of none;
I therefore through the streets held on my pace,
Some two miles further, to some resting place.
At last I spied a meadow newly mowed,
The hay was rotten, the ground half o'erflowed:
We made a breach, and entered, horse and man—
There our pavilion we to pitch began,
Which we erected with green broom and hay,
To expel the cold, and keep the rain away.
The sky, all muffled in a cloud, 'gan lower,
And presently there fell a mighty shower,
Which, without intermission, down did pour,
From ten at night until the morning's four;
We all this time close in our couch did lie,
Which, being well compacted, kept us dry."

The Penniless Pilgrimage is full of adventures of this order, and narrated in this spirit. Another strange journey was "A very merry Wherry Ferry Voyage, from London to York." On his way, being compelled by stress of weather to land at Cromer, the whole town became alarmed; he and his men were taken for pirates; they were taken into custody, and guards were set upon their wherry.

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"They did examine me—I answered them,
I was John Taylor, and a waterman,
And that my honest fellow, Job, and I,
Were servants to King James's Majesty:
How we to York upon a mart were bound,
And that we landed, fearing to be drowned.
When all this would not satisfy the crew,
I freely ope'd my trunks, and bade them view;
I showed them books of Chronicles and Kings—
Some prose, some verse, some idle sonnetings;
I showed them all my letters, to the full,
Some to York's Archbishop, and some to Hull."

And at last the magistrates, having some knowledge of him and his books, and the oath having been administered, they not only allowed him to depart, but showed him as much kindness, as before incivility. He went then to Boston; to Hull, of which he gives a flattering description, from his ample entertainment there. So also, at Bishopthorp, he was entertained by old Tobias Matthews, the Archbishop of York. But his most desperate adventure was going from London to Queenborough, in a paper boat, with two stockfish tied to two canes, for oars. Roger Bird, a vintner, was the principal in this mad enterprise. They took with them eight large and well-blown bladders, which were found necessary in the

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course of half an hour; for before they had got three miles, the paper bottom fell to pieces, and they had only the skeleton of the boat to trust to, and the bladders, four on each side.—Then they sat within six inches of the brim.

"Thousands of people all the shores did hide,
And thousands more did meet me on the tide,
With scullers, oars, with ship boats and with barges—
To gaze on us they put themselves to charges.
Thus did we drive and drive the time away,
Till pitchy night had driven away the day:
The sun unto the under world was fled;
The moon was loth to rise, and kept her bed;
The stars did twinkle, but the ebon clouds
Their light our sight obscures and overshrouds.
The tossing billows made our boat to caper—
Our paper form scarce being form of paper.
The waters four miles broad, no oars to row,
Night dark—and where we were we did not know.
And thus, 'twixt doubt and fear, hope and despair,
I fell to work, and Roger Bird to prayer;
And as the surges up and down did heave us,
He cried more fervently, 'Good Lord, receive us!'"

Our Waterman tells us honestly that he prayed as much as Roger, but worked hard as well; but after being on the water from Saturday until Monday, they reached Queenboro' on a fair day, when the mayor entertained all

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comers with bread, beer, and oysters. They presented him with the skeleton of their boat, which,

> ——"to glorify that town of Kent,
> He meant to hang up for a monument."

But while he was feasting them, the country people tore it piecemeal—everybody wishing to carry away a scrap as a memorial of this mad adventure. The Water Poet's writings are so humorous that a very large space might be taken up with quotations from them. It is a pity some of them are not better known, for although they do not contain any intrinsic merit, yet they do in a most curious manner illustrate the domestic and social life of the times. Taylor is honoured far beyond his betters, for his portrait is judged worthy to hang in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. Dr. Southey says of him, "If he had been in a higher grade of society, bred to some regular profession, he would probably have been a much less distinguished person in his generation. No spoon would have fitted his mouth so well as the wooden one to which he was born. His way of life was best suited to his character, nor

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could any regular education so fully have brought out that sort of talent which he possessed. Fortunately he came into the world at the right time, and lived in an age when kings and queens condescended to notice him; nobles and archbishops admitted him to their tables; and mayors and corporations received him with civic honours."

The following passages are some of those social outlines to which we have referred; it will be easily perceived they are satiric touches on the evils of the age.

"There was a tradesman' wife that I could name,
But that I'll not divulge abroad her shame,
Which a strong legion of good garments wore,
As gowns, and petticoats, and kirtles store;
Smocks, headtires, aprons, shadows, chaparons,
(Whim whams and whirligigs to please baboons,)
Jewels, rings, ooches, broooches, bracelets, chains,
More than too much to fit her idle brains;
Besides she paid, not counting ruffs and muffs,
Four pounds six shillings for two pair of cuffs."

SOW HEMPSEED.

"Sow hempseed among them, and nettles will die!
Beside this much, I, of my knowledge know,

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That where hemp grows no stinking weed can grow;
No cockle, darnel, henbane, tare, or nettle,
Near where it is can prosper, spring, or settle;
For such antipathy is in this seed,
Against each fruitless undeserving weed,
That it with fear and terror strikes them dead,
Or makes them that they do not show their head.
And as in growing, it all weeds doth kill,
So being grown it keeps its nature still;
For good men's uses serves, and still relieves,
And yields good whips and ropes for rogues and thieves.

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ROBERT NICOLL,

THE KINE HERDER.

THE name of Robert Nicoll cannot well be a strange one to most of the readers of these pages, but it has never yet met with the honour it deserves. "Scotland's second Burns,"—as Ebenezer Elliot has called him, and who has added to this that, "Burns, at his age, had done nothing like him." Sentences like these surround his name with a large amount of dignity and importance; and if the writings of the wonderful boy (for he died when only twenty-three years of age,) harmonise with this exalted character of them, they should be presented to the public from time to time until the appreciation of hardy thought, it may be, shall come, and his works, instead of being found in libraries here and there, at wide and

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distant removes from each other, shall be seen in every small cottage library—on the book shelf of every young man, and in the catalogue of every Mechanics' Institute and Society for mental improvement. Robert Nicoll said, as every true Poet may say, "I have written my heart in my Poems, and rude, unfinished and hasty as they are, it can be read there." His poetry abounds with noble and generous sentiments, and such a Poem his whole life seems to have been. Hence from his life, as well as from his words, there goes forth a salutary influence on every mind, especially of his order, breathing as both do the salutary lessons of self-reliance and self-denial—the love of truth—of nature and of man—firmness, and temperance and faith.—Robert Nicoll was born on the 7th of January, 1814, in the little village of Tulliebeltane, near Auchtergavan—a small spot at the foot of the Grampian Hills in Perthshire. His early years were cradled in poverty, for although his father was a farmer in comfortable circumstances, having become security to the amount of five or six hundred pounds, for a connexion by marriage, who had failed and absconded, Mr. Nicoll was plunged into entire ruin. The whole of his property was given up

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to satisfy the creditors of this person. He was obliged, with his family, to leave his farm, and became a day labourer in those very fields he had rented; but the Poems of Nicoll are the best testimony to the character of his early home. That must have been a place of domestic blessedness, and must have been a loving and lovely family, the inspiration of which continued so long intense and pure. It was one of those Homes, painted for immortality in Burns' "Cottar's Saturday Night"—a Home of the old world. Religion, Honesty, and Labour were the lessons of self-enduring virtue which were perpetually given from the life; and every member was invoked to a noble course, by the memory of the example of those from whom they had descended. This recollection of a worthy birthplace and birthright is a noble incentive to a noble life.

There is an anecdote mentioned of the mother of Nicoll which finely illustrates her character. When the intelligence reached her that her son was at Leeds, sick, dying, and languishing to see her, she had no means of paying the expenses of the long and weary journey. She reached Leeds, however; and when a friend afterwards enquired by what

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means she had been enabled to meet the expenses of the journey, she nobly replied: "Indeed, sir, I shore for the siller." Her wages as a reaper, her harvest fee, were the only means by which she could honestly fulfil the earnest request of her dying son; it may be easily conceived how powerful an influence a mother like this would exert over a sensitive mind and heart. It was mainly through this mother that Robert received the first elements and intimations of education; and it seems ever to have been the object of this noble minded woman to rear her children, so that they might again take their place in that sphere of respectability from whence through misfortune alone the family had been driven. The father of Mrs. Nicoll—"Elder John," as he is called in his grandson's poems, seems to have been likewise a noble specimen of human nature. A year or two since he survived at the venerable age of eighty-seven—"the Patriarch of Auchtergavan," remarkable for the possession of his bodily faculties and wonderful mental power, as well as physical activity. He is said to have been the last wearer of the broad blue lowland bonnet. The verses styled "My Grandfather," are a fine tri-

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bute to the ancient dignity of the sire, and the strong spontaneous affection of the son.

"But mair than a'—frae beuks, sae auld,
Frae mony treasured earnest page,
Thou traced for me the march of Truth
The path of right from age to age.
A peasant, auld, and puir, and deaf,
Bequeathed this legacy to me—
I was his bairn—he filled my soul
With love for liberty.

"Be blessings on thy reverend head!
I dinna need for thee to pray;
The path is narrow, but nae e'en,
E'er saw thee from it stray.
God bears his ancient servants up;
He's borne thee since thy life began;
I'm noble by descent:—Thy Grave
Will hold an honest man."

These circumstances, connected with the ancestry of Nicoll, guide the mind to a view of his moral education, and probable training. From sources like these he would imbibe more than from any number of books, or any course of scholastic training, proper views of life and of man. The presence, perpetually before him, of the noble and dignified in conduct, would early imbue his mind with the love of justice,

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and the scorn, which runs almost to fierceness from his pen, against all intolerance and oppression.

There, then, he received those impressions which, vividly imprinted on his mind, were afterwards evolved in verse. Books, of course, in that day, and in that secluded nook of Scotland, were rarely to be met with; but his mother had, before the period of the family misfortune, been a great reader. When she became poor, her time was too valuable to be spent in reading, but Robert usually read to her while she was working, and she would then doubtless relate the stories, anecdotes, and thoughts with which her memory would be stored.

Reading is the initial method of knowledge, so the soul begins to learn, in the course of a few years—the student learns to leave to a great degree the world of books behind him, and to trust rather to his own intuitions and observations of his own eye and his own soul. From his earliest years Robert was a voracious reader. He says himself, "Before I was six years of age I read every book that came in my way, and had read twice through my grandfather's small collection. When I had attained

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my sixth year I was sent to the school, which was three miles distant, and I generally read going and returning. To this day I can walk as quickly as my neighbours, and read at the same time with the greatest ease." At seven years of age began his life of labour; he was sent into the fields there to herd the cattle or the kye. There amidst the wild heather, on the muirland amidst the music of mountain torrents, and by the black tarns, the musings of Fancy visited him. He alludes to those days, in the verses called "Youth's Dreams." The humble, little roughly-clad boy, called even at that early period of his life, for the sweetness of his disposition and the book invariably carried beneath his plaid to the mountains, "the minister." With the fee he obtained for herding during the summer he was enabled to attend school during the winter. While on the hills, and beneath the hazle tree, and the bramble bush, and among the golden broom, came to the boy faint intimations of those rousing thoughts which afterwards made the life of his mental and moral being. He tells us

"Ou weel I mind how I would muse
And think had I the power,

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How happy, happy I would make
Ilk heart the warld o'er.
Yet scornfully the thoughtless fool
Would pass the laddie by:
But, O, I bless the happy time
When I was herdin' kye."

When he had reached his twelfth year he was taken from herding, and sent to work in the garden of a neighbouring proprietor. He had now less time for reading, but the change of employment made little difference in the hearty habit of study. As soon now as he could hoard together sufficient money he joined a Book Club, formed in a neighbouring village. He says, "I had previously devoured all the books in the parish for love, and I soon devoured all those in the library for money." He now began the Latin Rudiments, and obtained some slight acquaintance with Geometry, and with a young student of considerable attainments in a neighbouring village. He prosecuted a more systematic career of intellectual labour now, too, while herding, perhaps, as an occasional occupation. Several of the Waverley novels fell in his way. "I can yet look with no common feelings," he says, "on the wood, in which, while herding, I read Kenilworth."

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Poor little herd-boy! Not among all the rooms of splendour and state, where that noble tragedy swept by with its sceptred pall—not in the breasts of any of the noble and stately titled ones, whose eyes bent over those enchanting pages, was there a more thrilled and enraptured reader than he, in his humble guise, beneath the shadow of the branching trees, and the murmuring brooks. Nicoll reading Kenilworth would be no bad subject for a painter, while

> "The sunshine crept atour the crags,
> Like ravelled golden hair."

A noble theatre for the developement to the soul of a noble drama.

The time draws nigh when our friend must leave his home. Before he goes and we go with him, we will take occasion to notice that view of pure and sanctified affection which runs through and consecrates his verse. Youthful as he was, and dying, before Home became to him the consolation and the anchor, which it is to the world-weary man when as yet he had no home of his own, except that which Memory endeared to him, yet his spirit entered with hearty enthusiasm into all the old Home scenes, and joys, and sorrows. As this is always the indi-

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cation of a fresh, pure, untainted nature, some brief space may be allowed to citations. The Home, painted by Nicoll, is the old Scottish Home; the Home of the poor man, the lowly hut, "through which the blast sae cauldrife does gae," and the Home of "the Ingle-neuk,"

> "Where the staunch, auld warld honesty
> Is in the puir man's breast,
> And Truth, a guest within his hame,
> Is the place that I love best;
> Where the grey hair'd peasant tells
> The deeds his sires have done;
> Of martyrs slain on Scotland's muirs,—
> Of battles lost and won:
> Wherever prayer and praise arise,
> Ere toil-worn men can rest,
> From each humble cottage fane,
> Is the place that I love best."

The home of Nicoll is that place of calm retired individuality, a sort of Home that now looks in its details not unlike the Home of Romance. It may be feared that, alike in Scotland and England, much of the peculiar Home life and love has become extinct. The family does not find its sole enjoyment at Home. The joys of the old Home have, in many places, passed away before the fascinations of the public house. The social cheer, as the town or village

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have been enlarged, has yielded to coarse and brutalising pleasures. Social life is made up of reaction, and the same age which has witnessed so great an enhancement of domestic material comfort has also witnessed a deterioration in the happiness of many a circle. To those who believe that all national prosperity is summed and included in the Happy Home, it will be well to commend the pure pictures of Home Blessedness which, in so eminent a degree, Nicoll possessed the power to sketch. He has sketched no drunken mirth, no worldly folly, no frivolous imitation of fashion.—The songs that circled round the hearth, the daily fireside worship, the circumstances of National Glory.

"The auld wife by the ingle sits, and draws her cannie thread;
It hauds her baith in milk an' meal, an' a' thing she can need;
An' gleesome scenes o' early days upon her spirit steal,
Brought back to warm her withered heart by Scotland's Spinnin' wheel.

"O! there is gladsome happiness, while round the fire are set
The youngkers, when ahint the backs a happy pair are met,

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Wha, wi' a silent kiss o' love, their blessed pactien seal
While sittin' in their truth beside auld Scotland's Spinnin' wheel."

The verses, in which are enshrined most of the feelings and the pictures of Home, are called "OUR AULD HEARTHSTANE."

"Where ance the cosie fire was bien,
The winter rain-drop ourie fa's;
My father's floor wi' grass is green,
And roofless are the crumblin' wa's.
Auld thoughts, auld times, upon my heart,
Are backward rowin' ane by ane:
We'll bow our houghs and hae a crack
About them on our auld hearthstane.

"Our laigh cot house, I mind fu' weel,
On ae side mither, spinnin, sat,
Droning auld sonnets to her wheel,
And purring by her side the cat;
Anent was sair toil'd father's chair,
Wha tauld us stories, sad and lane,
O' puir folks' waes until we wish'd
Them a' beside our cosh hearthstane.

"And when the supper time was o'er,
The Beuk was ta'en as it should be,
And heaven had its trysted hour
Aneath that sooty auld roof tree.
Syne ilka child was sung to sleep
Wi' sangs o' deeds in ages gane
And rest was there, until the sun
Came blinkin' on our auld hearthstane.

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"Weel, weel! the wheels are broken now,
The lads or lasses auld, or dead;
The green grass o'er their graves doth grow,
Or grey hairs theek their aged head.
My parents, both, are far awa',
My brithers, fechtin', toilin' men;
It warms my heart unto them a',
The sight of this, our auld hearthstane.

"Hearthstane! tho' wae, I needna greet;
What gude on earth wad whingeing do?
The earth has fowth o' trusty hearts,
Let him who doubts it speir at you.
Ae wish hae I—that brither man,
The warld o'er, were bluid and bane;
Sic truthful, honest, trusty chields
As ance sat round our auld hearthstane."

The period of most importance in Nicoll's reading life was that during which he resided at Perth, where he had bound himself apprentice as a grocer. There, some kind friend lent him his ticket of right to the Perth Library, and thus he became acquainted with the Prose writings of Milton, and those of Locke and Bentham. Before this he had begun to lisp in numbers; indeed, when only thirteen years of age, some of his pieces had found their way into print; but for the gratification of his propensity to study, he seems to have left no duty unfulfilled.

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"I am employed," he says, "in working for my mistress from seven o'clock in the morning until nine at night, and I must therefore write when others are asleep. During winter, to sit without fire is a hard task; but summer is coming, and then"— There, then, at Perth, the youthful poet continued for several years, forming plans for his future life; indulging in fancies, many of them, probably, ephemeral enough, but many, too, of a sternly practical character; for he thought not only of himself, but of the welfare of the family he had left behind him, beneath "the sooty auld roof-tree," at Tulliebeltane: many of the members of the family followed the suggestions of the wanderer. Perceiving how miserably small were the earnings of his father, by out-door labour, and having himself carefully saved two pounds, he persuaded his mother with this to set up a small shop in the village, and to attend regularly the Perth market, where she might purchase or procure in exchange for her money, groceries and other small wares; and this hint and assistance acted upon, enabled that excellent mother to educate all her younger children, all of whom received a more systematic education than did Robert. The great claim of Nicoll

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upon our notice and respect is the glorious and truthful inspiration of his poetry; but he must not be regarded as merely a dreaming poet; he was a practical and clear-headed youth. It may excite a smile on some cheeks to read the sage advice he gives his brothers, and to notice his criticisms on men and the world; but however stern they may appear for so youthful a moralist, the writer lived in harmony with his doctrines, and prescribed no sterner rule than he himself practised.

Robert Nicoll's life was a perpetual "pursuit of knowledge under difficulties;" but difficulties are the great incentives to the pursuit after, and acquisition of knowledge. The scantiness of time and money, and means of intellectual improvement scarcely operate as difficulties. To the intrepid and earnest mind the most dangerous and hazardous difficulties to overcome, are those the reverse of all these.—An elegant mansion, a well filled library, a purse open for the last literary curiosity, with every incentive to laziness, and none to exertion, the most favourable circumstances are real difficulties; there is no appeal to self-reliance—to self-respect; there are no mountains to overcome; now with all these flattering tri-

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butaries, how can the Soul's real self be called into play? who, without struggling, can become strong? and here, is there no necessity for the struggling? This furnishes, perhaps, one of the strongest reasons for the superior progress made in intellectual attainment by those who have been compelled to rely on their own resources for all the knowledge they have obtained. The mountain that threatened to crush them was the school of their training, and the platform of their vision.

The following passages are noble, because they are a transcript from Nicoll's actual life. Speaking of Coleridge he says:—"What a mighty intellect was lost in that man for want of a little energy, a little determination. I almost cried when I found him saying, that instead of completing, or rather beginning his projected great work, he was obliged to write twaddle for ———, and compose M.S. sermons to support his station in society! Good God! that a man with an intellect so noble should have been a slave to conventionalities! Had he dared to be poor—had he known that bread, and cheese, and water, could nourish the body as well as the richest viands; that coarse woollens could cover it as well as the finest silks;

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and had he dared to act on that knowledge, how little of his time would it have taken to have sufficed his wants, and how much leisure would he have had for giving shape and utterance to his immortal thoughts! He could not say, with Jean Paul, 'What matter, if God's heaven be within a man's head, whether its outside covering be a silken cowl, or a greasy nightcap:' and through fear of losing caste in this world, this speck and point of Time, merely, he consented to forego his station in the World of Mind. O, for an hour of John Milton to make such men act and comprehend:" and, during the time that the young enthusiast wrote thus, he was really living on bread, and cheese, and water, that he might have leisure to give shape and utterance to his thoughts. It is an interesting life that of Robert Nicoll; his few letters which have been published abound in evidences of great strength. Writing to his mother, he says, "Do not mistake me, mother; I am not one of those men who faint and falter in the great battle of life. God has given me too strong a heart for that. I look upon earth as a place where every man is set to struggle and to work, that he may be made humble and pure hearted, and fit for the

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better land, for which earth is a preparation, to which earth is the gate. Cowardly is that man who bows before the storm of life; who runs not the needful race manfully, and with a cheerful heart. If men would but consider how little of *real* evil there is in all the ills of which they are so much afraid—poverty included—there would be more virtue and happiness, and less world and mammon worship on earth than there is. * * * This is my philosophy, and its motto is—

> "Despair, thy name is written on
> The roll of common men."

Half the unhappiness of life springs from the looking back to griefs which are past, and forward with fear to the future. Fear not for me, my dear mother, for I feel myself daily growing firmer and more hopeful in spirit. The more I think and reflect—and thinking instead of reading is now my occupation—I feel that whether I be growing richer or not, I am growing a wiser man which is far better. Pain, poverty, and all the other wild beasts of life which so affright others, I am so bold as to think I could look in the face without shrink-

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ing, without losing respect for myself, faith in man's high destinies, or trust in God."

By the interest of some friends in Edinburgh, he became the Editor of the *Leeds Times*, and he flung himself into his new labour with most hearty enthusiasm: and, indeed, so fired with radicalism that he not a little exasperated some of his good Scottish friends, who, although sufficiently liberal, found themselves thoroughly distanced by the sanguine boy. The paper rapidly increased its circulation. His labours at this time appear to have been, as Dr. Smiles who succeeded him in the Editorship has said, enormous: he was engaged on a new novel, a long poem, in writing leaders for a new Sheffield paper, and generally contributing several columns weekly to his own; yet, spite of all this labour he found time to run down to Dundee to be married to a lovely girl, Miss Alice Suter, to whom he had been a long time engaged. The comfort of his home was thus increased—his wife was younger than he by a year or two; she is said to have possessed considerable personal beauty, sweet and gentle manners, but above all, unbounded admiration for her husband. Returning to Leeds he prosecuted his labours as ardently as ever; but

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his health soon broke down beneath the accumulated efforts made by both body and mind, his form became bowed—his steps faltered,—and the ruddy complexion of the child of the mountains became pallid, his breath came short and thick, his cough became aggravated, and he seemed as if grown prematurely old. Meanwhile, in proportion as his body decayed, his mind became vigorous and strong; the tax on his powers was incessant, but the tax was always paid, until at last he wrote his final papers for the Leeds Times. Sitting up in bed propped by pillows, Dr. Smiles mentions that a friend entered just as he had completed them; he found him in a high state of excitement. The veins in his forehead were turgid, his eyes were bloodshot, his whole frame quivered, and the perspiration streamed from him. He had produced a pile of blotted and blurred manuscript, written in his usual energetic manner. It was immediately sent to press. These were the last leaders he ever wrote. They were speedily followed by an address of a few lines addressed to the "Radicals of the West Riding."

"BRETHREN,—My health compels me to

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leave your locality where I have laboured earnestly and sincerely, and I trust not altogether without effect in the holy work of human regeneration. I go to try the effect of my native air as a last chance for life; and after the last number I am not responsible for any thing which may appear in the Leeds Times, having ceased to be Editor of that paper from that date. I could not leave you without saying thus much, without bidding you, one and all, farewell, at least for a season. If I am spared, you may yet hear of me as a Soldier of the People's side; if not, thank God! there are millions of honest and noble men ready to help in the great work. Your cause emphatically is

> **The holiest cause of pen or sword,**
> **That mortal ever lost or gained."**

"And that you may fight in the cause, in an earnest, truthful, manly spirit, is the earnest prayer of one who never yet despaired of the ultimate triumph of truth.

"ROBERT NICOLL."

Soon after the writing of this address, he left Leeds on his way towards Scotland; he had sought health at Knaresbro', amongst its fresh

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and most beautiful scenery, but in vain; now, with his wife, and mother-in-law, who had come from Scotland to see him, he sought again his own land. At Selby he met the Corn Law Rhymer, Ebenezer Elliott, who was on his way to Leeds, to lecture before the Literary Institution; he was quite unprepared to behold the spectre of the young poet; the interview was affecting, but much more to Elliott than to Nicoll; his health was shattered, and perhaps he was beyond the reach of all such excitement. Yet the only poetry Nicoll was ever heard to recite and dwell upon, was Elliott's; it was but a brief interview: the elder bard had anticipated a friendly and a cheerful meeting with his young comrade in the ranks of Poetry and Freedom, in Leeds. "No words," says Elliott, in a letter to Dr. Smiles, "can express the pain I felt when informed, on my return to my inn, that he was dying, and that if I would see him I must reach his dwelling before eight o'clock next morning, at which hour he would depart by railway for Edinburgh, in the hope that his native air would restore him. I was five minutes too late to see him at his house, but I followed him to the station, where, before the train started he was pointed out to me in one

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of the carriages, seated, I believe, between his wife and his mother. I stood on the step of the carriage and told him my name—he gasped —they all three wept—but I heard not his voice." When he arrived in Edinburgh, he was received by his friend Mrs. Johnstone, his early friend, to whom his poems are dedicated. She tended him like her own child, but there were horrors around his death-bed which no kindness could dispel, there was the fear of destitution for the surviving dear ones. Sir William Molesworth forwarded £50. to him through Mr. Tait, but it did not arrive in time to lend any alleviation to his affliction; a day or two after its arrival he died in the arms of his wife. His body was followed to the grave by a numerous body of gentlemen connected with the press of Edinburgh. He died in 1837, his wife survived him but a very short period of time; she is the "Alice" of his poems. The heart melts with something of pity over their brief career, yet that pity must be misplaced which is given to the exalted and the good, who only for us become prematurely immortal. And so "unstained and pure," says Ebenezer Elliott, "at the age of twenty-three, died Scotland's second Burns, happy in this, that without

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having been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, he chose like Paul the right path. And when the terrible Angel said to his youth, 'Where is the *wise?* Where is the *scribe?* Where is the *disputer?* Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?' He could, and did answer, 'By the grace of God, I am what I am.' Robert Nicoll is another victim, added to the hundreds of thousands, who have gone before to bear true witness against the merciless."

Scotland's second Burns! but Robert Nicoll was what Robert Burns never was; he was an Apostle; he was a preacher of the Truth, and an earnest confronter of wrong-doing and wrong-doers. This he was eminently fitted to be by the possession of a large and catholic soul, and a soul strong as it was catholic. Frequently the burden of his lyric seems to ring upon our ears like a battle-song, powerful, ample, concentrated in its expression. He was one of those brave ones who seem born for, and therefore most fitted, to conduct the feelings of the people into the pathway of truth. Perhaps there never was an instance where so large an amount of poetry was married to so eminently practical a purpose; many of his

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poems are orations; firing and kindling words to which it is impossible to listen without feeling the spirit of action stirring within the mind. There were many features of his mental character which eminently fitted him for the office of leader and hailer of the people; especially may be noticed his honesty, his penetration, his power of describing character, so amply exhibited in his humorous delineations. Not the least important of his qualifications was, that he seemed apparently most unconscious of the power within him, only desirous of earning the bread of honest industry and independence, and fighting the battles of truth and freedom. In our country the Poet is seldom the Political Apostle; and in all countries those waters are too muddy for pure hands to lave, or bright eyes to look into. The Apostle of the People, in our day, is a purer character than we have perhaps ever known; still, in many instances, he is what he has ever been—shallow in thought and in knowledge—fluent in expression—the utterer of clap traps, which are loudly applauded —his ideas are generally made ready to hand, and merely pass through him, and flow from him. His physical structure almost precludes the possibility of any acquaintance with con-

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sciousness, and like the minister from the pulpit he comes among the people rather to teach them what they already know than to enlarge their intuitions—to deprecate their vices, and to guide them into the path of knowledge and virtue as the only true pathways to true power. Now the opposite of all this is true of Nicoll; he came to the field of Political Action, fresh from the mountains of his native land, bringing along with him, though young, a large experience of sorrow, anxiety, and yearning after the better life speaking within him, and a desire to unfold his knowledge and his idea of it. His knowledge of books and style, indeed, was limited; but then the books from whence he had drawn his thoughts were those of the masters; they were the writings of Milton, Locke, and Bacon: the last of these had taught him how to think; the former had taught him that the people is the origin and foundation of all political power: and his heart responded to his teachers—but they had taught him, too, that the people could only obtain that power by weapons forged on the anvils of intelligence, truth and goodness. He brought along with him, too, a heart earnestly deprecating bigotry, and all narrow and conventual thinkings and

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feelings. Some portion of the universal truth lay scattered everywhere around him—some rays from the Eternal fountain of Goodness fell over, and above all, witness for him those thoughts of Heaven.

"High thoughts.
They come and go
Like the soft breathings of a listening maiden;
While round me flow
The winds, from woods and fields with gladness laden:
When the corn's rustle on the ear doth come;
When the eve's beetle sounds its drowsy hum;
When the stars, dew drops of the summer sky,
Watch over all with soft and loving eye,
While the leaves quiver
By the lone river;
And the quiet heart
From depths doth call,
And garners all.
Earth grows a shadow, forgotten whole;
And heaven lives in the blessed soul!

High thoughts: they are my own
When I am resting on a mountain's bosom,
And see below me strown
The huts and homes where humble virtues blossom."

So also again, communing with himself he says:

"Arouse thee, soul!
God made thee not to sleep,

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Thy hear of earth, in doing naught away,
He gave thee power to keep.
Arouse thee, soul!"

Thus it will be seen how he was fitted to preach to others. His feelings were most warm and buoyant. The most prominent things which met his eye in the world were injustice, and fraud, and force, and with all his soul he sought to destroy them. Though so young, he appeared as the Iconoclast, and he set up a noble Icon; and as he worshipped it, he would be saved from any action or expression of wrong.—Doubtless a little time would have taught him the necessity and wisdom of a moderation which he did not possess; and in his writings there is sufficient evidence of the high-toned thinker to lead us to the clear conclusion, that, while he abated none of his anxieties for the dissemination of freedom, he would have mingled his sympathies with the conservative elements of society. His life was an endeavour—an aspiration: upon this we may remark more lengthily presently. There was nothing mean or base about that life. He not merely wrote verses—he acted his verses. In his life, his name is a synonyme for what is best and most beautiful in human nature: bravery and Robert

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Nicoll—truth-worshipping and Robert Nicoll. He has painted in his verse powerfully the intellectual and moral feelings of the class to which he belonged. The working classes—their life—their domestic joys and sorrows—they had been to some degree known before; but never had their higher life been drawn, till drawn by him. He depicted their sense of injustice—their indignation at the assumption of dogmatic priests and tyrannic lords—that of which Burns gave some intimations, he gloriously depicted and described the memories which come to the poor but intelligent man of past days and hours. He painted their visions, too: he described the intellectual food which nurtures noble natures in the most adverse ills and fates of life; he poured his blessings over books, the friends of the poor man, and described the inner wrestlings of the poor upon their way to the fields of knowledge and moral freedom.

Everywhere Nicoll found the objects of instruction. "The Mossy Stane"—

> "That ill faur'd lump of mossy stane,
> Has lain among the breckans lane,
> And neither groan'd nor made a mane,
> For years six thousand.
> That's fortitude—the stoics gane
> Wad wagg'd their pows on't.

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It's pleasant with a stone to crack,
It ne'er objects to word or fact,
And then they ha'e an unco knack
Of listening well.
They a' the story dinna tak'
Upon themsel."

How lofty is the religion at once of Humanity and Christianity, breathing through the following verses :—

"I may not scorn the meanest thing
That on the earth doth crawl :
The slave who dares not burst his chain,
The tyrant in his hall,
The vile oppressor who hath made
The widowed mother mourn ;
Tho' worthless, soulless, he may stand ;
I cannot, dare not scorn.

The darkest night that clouds the sky
Of beauty, hath a share ;
The blackest heart hath signs to tell
That God still lingers there.
I pity all that evil are ;
I pity, and I mourn :
But the Supreme hath fashioned all,
And, oh ; I dare not scorn."

And again :

"I ask not of his lineage,
I ask not of his name ;

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If manliness be in his heart
He noble birth may claim.
The palace, or the hovel,
Where first his life began,
I seek not of—but answer this:
'Is he an honest man?'

"Nay, blush not now, what matters it
Where first he drew his breath;
A manger was the cradle bed
Of Him of Nazareth.
Be nought; be any, every thing;
I care not what you be:
If 'Yes;' you answer, when I ask,
'Art thou pure, true, and free?'"

At the time when Nicoll's poetry appeared there had not so much been said as has been said since of Bonds of Brotherhood, and of the nobility of man, although these ideas are as old as Christianity: but through the whole of his verses there runs a perfect religion of humanity. We will be bound to say he had never read "Novalis," yet did he believe evidently enough, that "Man is the true Shekinah." He pleads eloquently for man; he will not allow the epithet of contempt or scorn to any man. "We are brethren a'." There are links and sympathies binding us to all; and noble natures have sympathies of a still higher and more exalted

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character. This Brotherhood of feeling pervades like sunshine his whole verses; lights up every expression; lends point and beauty to every idea. Other Poets of the labouring classes write of man, too; but they speak of man in general. Nicoll individualises: all men claim his love—all receive it; but he reserves the outgoings of his full affections for those who have been baptized in the waters of Truth, and have learned with him to venerate the Honest and the Pure; and, therefore, his Poems shape out an Ideal Humanity—an Ideal Humanity which may be held up to all the noblest exhibition of the Practical in Poetry yet delineated. We should all feel that it were as good that we should perish as live without an Ideal Beauty; without the perpetual embodyment before us of something better than we are, we can do nothing better for a man than create for him spiritual wants—wants to be satisfied only by his own faithfulness to the idea of his Destiny; and a man can say few things better to himself than, "I should like to be like that." It is the evidence of his sense of the existence of something above him; and men are not so much in danger of venerating and doing homage to error as not doing homage

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to anything. All reverence—all veneration is in its very nature divine. Error and evil never venerate; they never exist as ideal things, and, therefore, truly speaking, man never venerates them; man loves the evil principle; but in all of us is mingled with our love a recoil and horror of it. Man clasps error and evil to his arms, yet his eye ever follows goodness afar off; and in his heart he bows before it and worships, even while it recedes from him. The degree in which the power to admire exists in man, is the degree it may be said of superior mental and moral excellence. Cold, morbid natures never admire; they are in everything akin to the clod; the beautiful things of earth, and sea, and sky—the nobilities and heroisms of human conduct, find in their souls no mirror, and no response; they are incapable of effort—their breasts never heave with fervid enthusiasm: a night-mare sits upon the soul; a night-shade drops its dews upon the heart, where this spirit is, if spirit it may be called. There is scepticism in everything; all the wheels of the universe creak and jar; everything is dull mechanism. There is no faith in God, or Man, or Nature. God is a law of Nature; Nature is a machine, and man is a

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full-grown vegetable; there is nothing left to be wondered at; in life and death there is nothing left that is mysterious. There is not much difference between the unthinking clown, whose foot treads carelessly among the forest wild-flowers, but whose inner eye never sees the sweetness and meaning of their being, and our highly intelligent friend, the Encyclopœdist, who has a meaning close at hand for everything —whose curiosity in probing into second causes has fairly eclipsed all disposition to recognise, or believe in the existence of a first. Certainly, there is no danger in saying that, in most instances, the want of admiration is the want of religion; and an inaptitude to perceive the harmonies of Nature, usually accompanies a dimness to the perception of moral excellence. Wonder is akin to Worship; it has been said to be the parent of Superstition, but it is also the herald of Devotion. In wondering we are learning. What can he learn? whither can he turn his eye for instruction, who is but

> "A reasoning, self-sufficing thing;
> An intellectual all in all!"

It is one of the great requisites to moral health, that we keep the pores of the spirit

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perpetually fresh, open, and ready to receive. Now, it is well when some intimations of the Ideal Life are sufficiently intelligible and practical to charm the eye and the heart of the labouring man; and, perhaps, the highest is ever the most imitable; that which it concerns us most to know is ever the most conspicuous and plain.

> "The primal duties shine aloft like stars,
> The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
> Lie scattered at the feet of man like flowers."

The most awful goodness is not the farthest removed from the true sympathies of our being, or from our every day charities and affections; it is that of our household life—it is that which melts on the universal heart. Few can understand the grandeur of Brutus—the severity of Cato, or the magnanimity of Curtius, or the sacrifice of Ion; all can comprehend the intrepidity of Howard, the zeal of Elliott; the gentle goodness of Alice Leslie; and the highest imagination, therefore, will not look to the extravagant, the distant, and the unnatural in Human conduct and character. The imitation of the most noble Humanity, in every day life, fits us best for the acting our part well

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in those more extraordinary parts, which are sometimes pressed upon us by extraordinary ages.

Robert Nicoll's Poems contain an Ideal Life. In the life of the working man the Ideality does not the less exist, because it lingers round his fireside, and is enkindled from his home joys and sorrows. The value of the true Human Ideal is, that it is held before the eyes of all; it appeals to the sympathies and emotions of all; it is not intellectual, it is moral sympathy. The education of that Ideal is not in the Colleges and Universities of the land; it is not in the Temples and Palaces of Taste; but in the schools of suffering and endurance; of self-discipline and self-reliance. The foundation of that ideal is in the idea expressed above; the faith in the innate nobleness and worth of our race, in the belief of the power of that race to accomplish, and in the power of a resolute determination to shape out every word by the high doctrines involved in their great teachings. Advancing then only a step beyond this, we may say, that is impossible there can be any developement of ourselves, or improvement of our fellows—impossible that there can be any social advancement or reform without

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some ideal formed before the mental eye. Life is developed from within. A noble life is the result of noble conceptions, is born of noble desires, and noble sorrows; for it is in moral distress, in the agony which no medicine can assuage, and no surgeon can cure, that our highest and best life begins. Thus the unhappiness of some men is far better than the happiness of others; the happiness of some result, from the unconsciousness of a soul at peace in its sin; the unhappiness of another arises from the sense of its own short coming, its agony at the spectacle of the world's sorrow; its earnest hoping and desiring for a better life and a better faith. It is this unhappiness which creates the highest poet; the man who has not felt by fitful turns all the weeping and the woe; and all the joy and song, such ideas as these infallibly produce, can, indeed, never be a poet; he may rhyme; he may please; he cannot thrill and inspire; he cannot say to men, "Come up Hither."

Nicoll was the Poet of Faith; his eye detected the injustice and the wrong in the world, and his heart not only anticipated, but firmly believed in the advent of another reign of justice, and goodness, and truth. He came

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to the cities from the mountains. He had beheld there the grace, and the order, and the beauty of Nature; the poverty he had beheld was of a very relative character, and it had not been seen in contrast with the extravagant grandeur and tinsel of wealth. He came from the mountains where he had read the pages of Locke, and Milton, and Bacon: The justice of Nature and of Humanity were deeply written upon his soul; he entered the city, and he saw the reverse of all that his eye or his heart had beheld; he had seen man passionate in the revelry of sin; he had dreamt of the heraldic disproportions of social life, but here they were presented upon a scale beyond all proportion more terrible, more appalling, and gigantic than the vision had ever pictured. A soul on fire with the love of justice and of beauty; a heart melting with pity for the sorrows and sufferings of man: well, he never lost his faith, he only intensified his exertion; he never renounced his hope, he only redoubled his zeal; he had sung for man. Now although quite young, he was permitted to harness himself, and as a soldier to live and fight for him; and then questionless from the crowd and smoke of Leeds, his mind would move back and gather

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no small share of its inspiration from the mountains of Perthshire—his heart would move to the "Folk of Auchtergavan."

> "Happy, happy, be their dwellings,
> By the burn, and in the glen;
> Cherie lasses, cantie callans,
> Are they all in Auchterga'en."

for the true nationality of a noble heart never deserted him. Scenes, beheld every day without especial emotion, kindled strange raptures and pains, when beheld from the distance of many miles, through the glasses of memory. All the beauties and the humanities that made life lovely and desirable, floated down, and were printed in his verse; the rivulet which met his eye, and danced by his side in the course of one whole long summer's day, through the forest, through the meadow, by the green old thicket, the leaf-shadowed waterfall, and the echoing caverns of the old hermitage. How passionately his spirit lingers over the wild flowers, those

> "Beautiful children of the woods and fields,
> That bloom by mountain streamlets, 'mid the heather.'

Aye! that heather.

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"The dark hair of our maidens it decks, on our hills;
And the place of a plume in the bonnet it fills:
On the mountain it blooms, and in valleys below,
Oh, the bonnie brown heather of Scotland, O!
The heather, the heather, the bonnie brown heather;
The heather, the heather of Scotland, O!"

All the out-gushings of a sensitive nature, touched by the homely things of the mountain and the cottage, lighten over these verses. Here are portraits of the mountain beauties, of Janets, Kates, and Marys. Here are the dances on the hill side, and the summer wooings by the whimpling burnie "when the starnies ope their een." And here are the winter courtin's by the "ingle neuk." Nicoll was not wanting in perception and power to praise woman's beauty, but always in a strain of happy cheerful humour, always in the true tone of virtue and brotherly affection.

"The lasses! from the jewelled queen
To rosy dears in ha' and hut:
The lasses! here and every where:
The lasses yet, the lasses yet.
The lasses yet, the lasses yet,
Rise up ye loons ye dare not sit;
Around me join each voice to mine,
The lasses yet, the lasses yet."

There was plenty of humour in Robert's soul,

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sometimes sly and quiet, sometimes broad and grotesque; the Scottish Minister and the Village Dominie—Janet Macbean, who ruled the roost among all the auld ale-house wives—and Janet Dunbar "the sonsy auld carlin, renown'd through the whole kintra side for a gash skilly body." In retired districts there is a far wider scope for the observation and developement of character, than in the large city and town. Every person has a character, and with a depth of observation extraordinary, when it is remembered that it must have been exercised in very early youth; all the varieties of village character are sketched; a sly satire on "Auld Donald" the pensioned old Soldier—the Bailie, the Provost, and the Blacksmith—"Fiddler Johnnie,"—and "Our Auld Guid Man"—here they are, all as perfect as the specimens in a museum. The auld wife whose tongue wearied her husband—and poor Benedict, the married man—and the gruesome lover; why, they have created laughter on thousands of faces, and will on thousands more; yet the same spirit of genial humour, roused to passionate love and earnestness, accompanies the poet's pen, when the national sights, and sounds, and scenes of the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland accost him, and demand his song.

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"O leese me in my highland plaid,
The tartan plaidie, tartan plaidie;
The very sight o't makes me glad,
The bonnie tartan plaidie."

The bag-pipes along the hill side—the blythe pibroch, rousing the auld Scottish thoughts of the days of the chieftain's hall, and the men of the blue bonnet and the plaid—sounds that sung a coronach over the warrior's grave, and moved the steps to music, in the dance down the hall, or on the hills. The bonnie Highland hills, outshining all other lands, however "gowden" their earth, or fair their skies—the hills, with their damsels fair and beautiful, though born on the moss covered rock, and amidst the roar of the elements—the hills, with the wild piping blast, dearer to the Highlander's heart than airs laden with orange perfumes, or lands covered with the rich vintage. The thistle, rugged and uncouth, is loved because it rears itself there, in the land of home and freedom;

"For the love of the maiden, the praise of the free;
For the blessings that father and mother will gi'e,
For the hames that are dear, both to thee and to me;
We'll stand by the Auld Scottish Thistle.
Put your foot to mine,
Heart and hand let us join,
To stand by the Auld Scottish Thistle."

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Now, was not this a Scotsman? was not this a melodist, a singer? was not here a praiseworthy and brave nationality? did not this boy understand something of Man and of Nature? of the springs and fountains of Virtue, and Affection and Love? And yet the words of eulogy spoken over his grave have been few. Not a portrait of him has ever been engraven, and we believe no portrait exists—not a stone marks the place of his slumbers in the church yard of North Leith. Christopher North! Christopher North! how is this? is there no worth in this volume? was there nothing noticeable here? was the radicalism of Robert so heavy a crime, that the name of one of Scotland's truest singers was thought to be only worthy of oblivion? You must have heard of him; did you give so much praise to that ranting, roaring chield, the Ettrick shepherd, that you could spare none for any other low born child of the mountains? A notice from you would rescue his name from its silence and obscurity; would, perhaps, give a wider circulation to his words, and build a tomb over his grave. But let the intelligent minds, and loving hearts of Scotland look to it: when in Edinburgh, some two years since, we heard some rumours of a memorial to the Poet's

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memory; but from that time to this we have heard no more. It is not simply the erection of a stone to departed merit and genius, but it is the keeping alive these consecrated words in men's hearts and memories that seems especially so desirable. To the Scotsman he will seem, when duly understood, most worthy, because he has breathed through his poems the genius of his country; he has been true and faithful to Fatherland; he has formed a flute of mountain reeds, and through it, strains touching indeed to those who know the hills, the gowan, and the gorse, the tumbling waterfall, and the affections which circle around and beneath the shadows of mountain trees, and tall hill tops. But this is not his only, nor his greatest claim to homage and regard. Although so young, he was and is the Beranger of our language; and if a comparison be drawn between the Beranger and Nicoll, the Frenchman suffers by the comparison. Beranger, like Nicoll, is ardently attached to the honest and manly in conduct, to freedom, and to nationality; he takes fire, too, from the emotions of his countrymen, and pours forth his emotions again in high and sounding chorus; and this he does principally from the possession of a cheerful humour, savouring far more of the English

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than the French mind. Neither is he merely impulsive; he is ideal and anticipative; his songs, if they are adaptations to passing events, are echoes and reverberations from the choir and the shrine within He is faithful to the popular cause; with a wonderful flexibility of verse he indulges in that covert satire and song, which, in France, in some measure answers the purpose of our public meetings. Thus he satirises the rising ambition of Napoleon, under the picture of a village coquette. Who does not see the admirable satire?

"What! is it you, Lizette?
You a rich robe can wear?
You mounting an aigrette?
You deck'd with jewels rare?
Oh! No, no, no, no, no!
You are Lizette no more!
Oh! No, no, no, no, no!
Bear not the name you bore."

Compare the following poem, called the "Plebeian," with one of Nicoll's which we cite immediately following. It is necessary to remind the reader that the Poet's family name is written with or without the aristocratic *de* prefixed.

"How's this? I hear that people blame
The *de* that stands before my name;
Art thou, too, of the old noblesse?
I noble! No, sir; I confess.

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No, none for me of knightly race,
The patent did on vellum trace;
To love my country's all I know.
I'm of a breed
That's low indeed:
Yes; very, very low.

Would I'd been born without the *de!*
For from my blood I must infer,
That my forefathers in their day,
Have cursed a master's despot sway.
His power was of long standing; still
He was the grindstone of the mill,
They but the grain it crush'd—and so
I'm of a breed
That's low indeed:
Yes; very, very low.

"My sires did never on their lands
Vex the poor serfs with grasping hands;
Nor in the woods did people fear
To find their noble swords were near.
No one, when tired of his campaign,
Was turn'd into a chamberlain
Of Charlemagne, by Merlin's blow.
I'm of a breed
That's low indeed:
Yes; very, very low.

"Never, when civil broils were rife,
Did *my* brave sires partake the strife;
Nor was the English Leopard made
Free of our cities by their aid.
Not one of them did sign the league,
What time the Church, by its intrigue,

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The State did almost overthrow.
I'm of a breed
That's low indeed:
Yes; very, very low.

Then to my flag, sirs, leave me, ye
Whose button holes ennobled be;
Whose noses sniff the coming gale;
Who every sun that's rising hail.
I honour but a vulgar tribe,
For I can *feel* as well as gibe,
I've flattered but the sons of woe.
I'm of a breed
That's low indeed:
Yes; very, very low.

Now, listen how Robert Nicoll, in a similar spirit, chaunts the praises of the "PUIR FOLK."

"Some grow fu' proud, o'er bags of gowd,
And some are proud of learning;
An honest poor man's worthy name
I take delight in earning.
Slaves needna try to run us down,
To knaves we're unco dour folk;
We're often wranged, but deil may care,
We're honest folk, tho' poor folk.

"Wi' Wallace wight we fought fu' weel,
When lairds and lords were jinking;
They knelt before the tyrant loon:
We brak his crown, I'm thinking.
The muckle men he bought wi' gowd,
Syne he began to jeer folk;
But neither swords, nor gowd, nor guile,
Could turn the honest poor folk.

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"When auld King Charlie tried to bind,
Wi airn, saul, and conscience,
In virtue o' his right divine,
And ither daft-like nonsense.
Wha raised at Marston, such a stour,
And made the tyrants fear folk;
Who pray'd, and fought, wi' Pym, and Noll?
The trusty, truthful, puir folk.

"Who ance, upon auld Scotland's hills,
Were hunted like the paitrick;
And hack'd with swords, and shot wi guns,
Frae Tummel's banks, to Ettrick;
Because they would not let the priests
About their conscience steer folk?
The lairds were bloodhounds to the clans,
The martyrs were the puir folk.

"We sow the corn, we hold the plough,
We a' work for our living;
We gather nought but what we've sown,
All else we reckon thieving.
And for the loon wha fears to say
He comes o' lowly small folk,
A wizen'd saul the creature has;
Disown him will the poor folk.

"Great sirs, and mighty men of earth,
Ye aften sair misca' us;
And hunger, cauld, and poverty,
Come after ye to thraw us;
Yet up our hearts we strive to heave,
In spite of you and your folk;
But mind, enough's as gude's a feast,
Altho' we be but poor folk.

"We thank the powers for good and ill,
As grateful folk should do, man;

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But maist o' a' because our sires
Were tailors, smiths, and ploughmen.
Good men they were, as staunch as steel,
They didna wrack and screw folk:
Wi empty pouches, honest hearts,
Thank God! we come o' poor folk."

It will be seen that Beranger and Nicoll are both lyrists. Their poems are not cast in that lyrical mould from whence the verses issue like Hellenic beauties from grot or grove—their verses brighten like polished steel: they come forth girt and road-ready, like warriors prepared to do a world's work. The measure of their verse is not like the tripping of fairy feet across the sward, but the measured tramp of armed men. We do not hear the flakelets of song quivering along the crisp grass; we figure no scene of Arcadian softness—no tremulous glow of purple heavens, blushing over regions of still life and patriarchal loneliness; rather the stertorous hum of armed and encamped hosts around the beleaguered city: real earnestness meets us here. Nicoll had great individual will: his poems, when he likes to make them so, are like old Luther's words—they are battles. Life he thought useless, unless it was resolved in action: action was to him the interpretation of the Sphinx's riddle; it was Alexander's sword, with which he cut life's gordian

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knot. Only in earnest action can we look for manly sentiment. There can be no honesty where there is not boldness and intrepidity.—To stretch whole days and weeks merely upon the sward of life—to shun man—to forswear the life of either mental or bodily labour—and to be leal and true with all this, is impossible.—Laziness of habit begets mawkishness of feeling and falseness of expression. To live indeed we must put our powers under arrest; we must sentence them to hard labour and endurance in the school of life. The poems of a man are really beaten out upon the anvil of his life.—Robert Nicoll has painted an individual in his poems: it is himself, although no verses can be more free from egotism: he has described them, indeed, as peculiar to his class, but then we know that his life was one great endeavour, nor can any life be great or worthy that is not; this endeavour expresses truly that intellectual struggle—that moral idea—which, living before any man, must be attempted, to be reached.—His life seems to present us that noblest of all characters—that character which plans; and consults the tendency of every inferior action, with reference to some superior aim; and this circumstance leads to the belief that had he been spared, he would have achieved something still

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more worthy of his country, his age, and himself. Finally, then, grandeur of sentiment characterises these verses, but a grandeur not like the grandeur of the cold marble,—but warm—instinctive—like life. These great verses remind us of the men of Plutarch's lives—hearts Roman in firmness, but Christian in sentiment and dignity of demeanour. Let the following citations, which shall close this notice, speak; and let us hope that while they speak, they may inspire.

"WE ARE BRETHREN A'.

"A HAPPY bit hame this auld world would be,
If men when they're here could make shift to agree;
And ilk said to his neighbour, in cottage and ha',
'Come, gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.'

I ken na why ane with anither should fight,
When to 'gree would make a' body cosie and right;
When man meets with man, 'tis the best way ava',
To say, 'Gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.'

My coat is a coarse ane, and yours may be fine,
And I maun drink water while you may drink wine—
But we baith ha'e a leal heart, unspotted to shaw,
Sae gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.

The knave ye would scorn, the unfaithful deride,
Ye would stand like a rock, with the truth on your side;
Sae would I—and naught else would I value a straw—
Come, gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.

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Ye would scorn to do fauseey by woman or man,
I hand by the right, aye, as weel as I can;
We are ane in our joys, our affections, and a'—
Come, gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.

Your mother has loved you, as mithers can lo'e,
And mine has done for me what mothers can do.
We are ane in our joys, our affections, and a'
Sae give me your hand—we are brethren a'.

We love the same simmer day, sunny and fair;
Hame! oh, how we love it, and all that are there;
Frae the pure air of Heaven, the same life we draw,
Come, gie me your hand—we are brethren a'.

Frail, creeping Auld Age, will soon come o'er us baith,
And creepin' alang at his back will be Death—
Syne into the same mither-yard we will fa';
Come, gie me your hand—WE ARE BRETHREN A'.'

VISIONS.

"My hand is strong, my heart is bold,
My purpose stern," I said;
"And shall I rest till I have wreathed
Fame's Garland round my head?
No! men shall point to me, and say
See what the bold can do."
"You dream!" a chilling Whisper said,
And quick the vision flew.

"Yes, I will gain," I musing thought,
"Power, pomp, and potency;
Whate'er the proudest may have been,
That straightway will I be.
I'll write my name on human hearts
So deep, 'twill ne'er decay."
"You dream!" and as the Whisper spake,
My vision fled away.

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"I'm poor," I said; "but I will toil,
And gather store of gold;
And in the purse—the fate of Kings
And nations I will hold.
I'll follow Fortune, till my path
With wealth untold, she strew."
"Again you dream," the Whisper said,
And strait my vision flew.

"I'll breathe to man," I proudly thought,
"A strain of poesy,
Like the angelic songs of old
In fire and energy.
My thoughts, the thoughts of many lands,
Of many men shall grow;"
"You dream!" the Whisper scorning said,
I dared not answer, "No!"

"If I can gain nor name, nor power,
Nor gold, by high emprise,
Bread to the hungry I will give,
And dry the mourner's eyes.
Thro' me the sun of joy shall find
Its way to Sorrow's door;"
"The wildest dream of all!" then said
The Whisper, "you are poor."

"I'm poor, unheeded, but I'll be
An honest man," I said;
"Truth, I shall worship, yea, and feel
For all that God hath made.
The poor, the honest man can stand
With an unflinching brow
Before Earth's highest—such I'll be;"
The Whisper spoke not now.

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JOHN CLARE, THE PEASANT POET.

But never have Literature and Labour been more beautifully combined than in the instance of John Clare, the Northamptonshire peasant. Perhaps none of those who have attained any degree of eminence in literature from the lowly walks of life, ever had to contend with difficulties so stern and severe as this noble soul. He was born at Helpstone, near Peterborough, on the 15th of July, 1793, the only son of Parker and Anne Clare, who were also natives of the same village.

Poverty had always been their lot, and their ancestry had always been as poor as themselves. Parker Clare was a farmer's labourer, and appears to have universally commanded respect in his sphere of life; and when, towards the close of his days, he was afflicted with rheumatism, Lord Milton sent him to the sea-bathing infir-

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mary at Scarborough, and thence he derived some benefit: but being desirous to save expense, he walked nearly the whole distance home again; this brought on a return of his pains. At last he was reduced to the condition of a helpless cripple and pauper, receiving an allowance of five shillings a week from the parish. The mother of Clare was a modest, pains-taking woman, and very much of Clare's peculiar temperament, which seems to have been derived from her. Thus from his earliest years he became acquainted with Poverty in her most unkindly moods. He was born, indeed, in a time when the English village was a very different place to the village of the present day; for repulsive as many of the more modern features are, there has doubtless been a considerable improvement in all the particulars of social happiness. Wretchedness dogged the heels of his parents, and he was early called to the same hard lot; and very early, his mind seems to have been vexed with the anticipation of a lot, at the close of his days, similar to that of those who gave him birth. With a mournful independence, he says—

"Who but is grieved to see the Fatherless
Stroll with their rags, unnoticed, through the street?

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What eye but moistens at their sad distress,
And shed's compassion's tears whene'er they meet?

Oh, may I die before I'm doom'd to seek
That last resource of hope, but ill supplied,
To claim the humble pittance once a week,
Which justice forces from disdainful pride.

As these were the circumstances in which our Poet was born, it will be easily conceived how few were the means of education of which he could avail himself; indeed, in his boyhood he received no education; but by extra work as a ploughboy, and by helping his father morning and evening at threshing, he earned the money himself which paid for his learning. From the labour of eight weeks he generally acquired as many pence as would pay for a month's schooling; and thus, in the course of three years, he received so much instruction that he was able to read the Bible; and during this time he was procuring a few books. He appears to have had a kind, encouraging teacher in Mr. Seaton, of Glinton, an adjoining parish; and when the teacher is kind, and the pupil in earnest, wonders may be wrought, and difficulties wonderfully give way. His first book after the Bible seems to have been "Robinson Crusoe;" and when he was thirteen years of age, from

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seeing Thomson's "Seasons," the book kindled all the latent fuel of poetry within him: he determined to possess the book himself; and as soon as he had saved a shilling to buy it with, he set off for Stamford, the nearest country town, and arrived there so early, that none of the shops were open. Few instances of avidity in the pursuit of knowledge are more interesting than this of the poor Helpstone ploughboy. Sauntering through those silent streets—waiting like a worshipper outside a temple, until the doors should open, and thus to admit him to the presence of the desired instruction and inspiration—perhaps in all Stamford, at that hour, there was not a nobler, or so noble a being, as that ploughboy. He returned home through Burleigh Park, and amidst its beautiful scenery, he composed his first poem. At this time, however, he knew nothing of writing or arithmetic; and his verses, therefore, would have passed into oblivion, but for the kindness of Mr. John Turnill, then of Helpstone, who proved, perhaps, the best of all his benefactors, for he taught him the use of these indispensable tools to all effort. It was a permanent boon—far more costly, and

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involving far more self-denial, than the donation of even many guineas.

In the summer of 1817 Clare left Helpstone, and became a lime-burner at Bridge Casterton, in Rutlandshire: and here the thoughts of matrimony made him for the first time dream of becoming an author: he had hitherto poured forth his verses for his amusement—he now thought they might be made to contribute a little to his support; for here, at Bridge Casterton, he met Patty, whom he has celebrated so frequently in his verse, and who afterwards became his wife. The history of his efforts to publish his first volume are like all such efforts. He had ascertained from a printer at Market Deeping that the expense of issuing a prospectus would be about a pound; so he set himself to work to obtain that sum. But we will have the narrative in the poet's own words.

"At the latter end of the year I left Casterton and went to Pickworth, a hamlet which seems, by its large stretch of old foundations and ruins, to have been a town of some magnitude in past times, though it is now nothing more than a half solitude of huts and odd farmhouses, scattered about some furlongs asunder.

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The marks of the ruins may be traced two miles further from beginning to end. Here, by hard working, day and night, I at last got my one pound saved for the printing of the proposals, which I never lost sight of; and having written many more poems, and excited by a change of scenery, and being over head and ears in love—above all, having the most urgent propensity to scribbling, and considering my latter materials much better than my former ones, I considered myself more qualified for the undertaking; so I wrote a letter to Henson, of Market Deeping, wishing him to begin the proposals and address the public himself, urging that he could do it far better than I could; but his answer was that I must do it. After this I made some attempts, but not having a fit place for doing anything of that kind, from lodging at public houses, and being pestered with many inconveniences, I could not suit myself by doing it immediately, and so, from time to time, it was put off. At last I determined, good or bad, to produce something; and as we had another limekiln at Ryhall, about three miles from Pickworth, I often went there to work by myself, where I had leisure to study over such things in my journeys of going and

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returning. On these walks, morning and night, I have dropped down five or six times to plan an address, &c. In one of these musings my prose thoughts lost themselves in rhyme. Taking a view, as I sat beneath the shelter of a woodland hedge, of my parents' distresses at home, of my labouring so hard, and so vainly to get out of debt, and of my still added perplexities of ill-timed love—striving to remedy all, and all to no purpose, I burst out into an exclamation of distress, 'What is life!' and, instantly recollecting that such a subject would be a good one for a poem, I hastily *scratted* down the two first verses of it, as it stands, as the beginning of the plan which I intended to adopt, and continued my journey to work. But when I got to the kiln I could not work for thinking about what I had been so long a time trying at, so I sat me down on a lime-skuttle, and out with my pencil for an address of some sort, which, good or bad, I determined to send off that day; and for that purpose, when it was finished, I started to Stamford with it, about three miles off. Still, along the road, I was in a hundred minds about the matter, whether I should throw up all thoughts about it, or stay till a more fitting opportunity,

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and have the advice of some friend or other; but, on turning it over in my mind again, a second thought informed me that I had no friend. I was turned adrift on the broad ocean of life, and must either sink or swim. So I weighed matters on both sides, and fancied, let what bad would come, it could but balance with the former; if my hopes of the Poems failed, I should not be a pin worse than usual; I could but work then, as I did already. Nay, I considered that I should reap benefit from the disappointment; the downfall of my hopes would free my mind, and let me know that I had nothing to trust to but work. So, with this favourable idea, I pursued my intention—dropping down on a stone heap before I entered the town, to give it a second reading, and correct what I thought amiss."

The prospectus was published, and it was written in Clare's usual modest vein; it attracted for the time no attention, producing only the promise of seven subscribers. The poor author possessed no power to introduce his papers to the notice of those circles most likely to be able to serve him. At last, however, Messrs. Taylor and Hessey paid him £20 for the volume; and the heavens over our friend's head began to brighten.

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He was sent for by Lord Milton to Milton Abbey; Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Spencer, the Marquis of Exeter, Lord Radstock, immediately came forward to his aid; all contributed sums of money; articles of furniture were forwarded to his cottage. Many other of the noblest names in the country, the Prince Leopold, the Dukes of Bedford, Devonshire, and Northumberland, and many other noblemen, united to create a fund, by which the Poet might be for life set above the threats of penury and want; and in this, principally by the energetic kindness of Lord Radstock, the friends of Clare were successful. He was enabled to protect his parents in their declining age. In the spring of 1820 he married "Patty of the Vale," the "Rosebud of Humble Life," Martha Walker, the daughter of a cottage farmer, of Bridge Casterton; and for some years a considerable degree of happiness seemed to smile over the humble peasant Poet.

And now probably for some time there intervened in the history of our peasant Poet years of comparative enjoyment; not that the possession of money entailed no penalties. To possess in England any amount of fame or notoriety, especially in such circumstances as

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Clare's, exposes the possessor to innumerable visitors; and this to a person in Clare's sphere involved very considerable loss of time: frequently the half of a day in the harvest was thus lost; and the frequent recurrence of these visits would be in the course of the year a serious drawback upon an income. But the one sad affliction of our Poet's life was, and is, lunacy. Almost twenty years since, sitting in a Box of the Theatre at Peterboro', which he attended for the first time with Mrs. Marsh, the lady of Dr. Marsh, the Bishop of Peterboro', the performance of the piece struck upon a nature cast apparently in too fine a mould, and from that time to the present, he has been the victim of a diseased sensibility. For a long time he was confined in an asylum at Epping, near London; from thence he escaped, and passing through a series of adventures he walked the whole of the distance home to Northboro', a village some little distance from Helpstone, where his wife was residing and still resides in a little cottage built for Clare by the Earl Fitzwilliam. At present he is confined in an asylum in the neighbourhood of Northampton. It is not to be supposed that the mind has really tottered from its throne: the fact appears to be that

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the body is too weak for the mind. Some of the most pleasant and touching verses have been written since his affliction, and in the course of a few pages we shall lay before our readers some of these curiosities of literature. The memory of the Poet has not during his long estrangement passed away from his native village. From its excellent rector, the Rev. Mr. Mossop, we derived much of the information we have detailed above. In a recent pilgrimage to thè Poet's birthplace, he most courteously received and furnished to the writer the mournful details of the swan of Helpstone. And from thence we passed to the cottage of Northborough, and spent a few moments with Mrs. Clare—"Patty," and we thought the tears with which she told us some of the incidents of the old time, so long ago, the best testimony to the soundness and healthiness of Clare's home affections. The old violin hung on the wall with which the cottage used to echo to the song in the old days; when the verses were read by the fireside as soon as made. "We were all so happy in those days," said the poor woman, in a tone that sounded like the wail of a heart sadly learned in the lesson of endurance and suffering. Intemperance has been the sad

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cause of much of the misery of those, who, from the fields of labour have elevated themselves to be the bards and the singers to their fellows. It is very delightful to record that from this frailty Clare was exempt: not that he did not enjoy a can of beer. He, however, never went to the Public House. His wont seems to have been to purchase occasionally his mug of beer, and going frequently among the very poorest of his neighbourhood to sit with them talking, and probably observing while contributing something to their enjoyment. Many illustrations might be given of his extreme sensitiveness; the delicacy and refinement with which he invariably speaks of Woman, is one proof of this. His words never burn with passion—they glow with modesty and sensibility. Woman, however, is the secret spring of his inspiration: indeed, he says

> "I wrote my better poems there—
> To Beauty's smile I owe it;
> The Muses they get all the praise,
> But Woman makes the poet.
> The Muses they are living things,
> But Beauty still is dear;
> But though I worshipped stocks and stones,
> 'Twas Woman everywhere."

And is there not an extreme sensibility indi-

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cated in the following strange extract from one of his letters. How affectingly does the vehemence of the former portion contrast with the wisdom of the latter:—

"My two favourite elm trees at the back of the hut are condemned to die—it shocks me to relate it, but 'tis true. The savage who owns them thinks they have done their best, and now he wants to make use of the benefits he can get from selling them. O, was this country Egypt, and was I but a caliph, the owner should lose his ears for his arrogant presumption, and the first wretch who buried his axe in the roots should hang on their branches as a terror to the rest. I have been several mornings to bid them farewell. Had I one hundred pounds to spare, I would buy them reprieves—but they must die. Yet this mourning over trees is all foolishness—they feel no pains—they are but wood, cut up or not. A second thought tells me that I am a fool: were all people to feel as I do, the world could not be carried on; a green would not be ploughed; a tree or bush would not be cut for firing or furniture; and everything they found when boys would remain in that state till they died. This is my indisposition, and you will laugh at it."

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But, notwithstanding the distinguished patronage which at one time Clare received, he was never lifted beyond the avenues of Poverty, although, we believe, he has never since the period we have referred to, known absolute want, nor have his poems ever been extensively popular; and now, even in literary circles, they are unreferred to, if not entirely unknown. Their purity, their excessive modesty, their intense devotion to Nature in the woods and the fields, in an age when the woods and fields have been comparatively forsaken, these may be assigned as some of the reasons for the obscurity which has gathered round the name of one of the sweetest singers of the children of Labour. Clare is Bloomfield's successor, and he is very far his superior, dwelling among the ever-varying scenes of Nature, and abounding, as he unquestionably does, with homely images, he is yet not merely a rustic Poet, or a rural Bard. Such poets receive, but do not give; they take passing sensible impressions of the Georgic world, but they do not reflect themselves. From such writers we scarcely expect reflection; their Bucolics abound in prettinesses and generalities, without the boldness of generalization; but Clare has more

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fully individualized his scenery than any poet of his class, always excepting Burns: it is the poetry of Rural Life and Taste—but it is Rural Life with the dignity of the man, not with the rudeness or mannerism of the clown. It is worth some inquiry what makes the evident distinction between the methods of Cowper, and Wordsworth, and Keats, and Tennyson; and between all these again and our humbler friend, of whom we are now speaking, all love the country, but few love it as Clare loves it. Yet, it seems indispensable to the proper appreciation of rural scenery, that we should not only take our walks there, but find our work there. Clare writes, as Gilbert White would have written, had he been a poet. He threads his way through all Nature's scenery with a quiet meditation and reflection, and frequently those reflections, if not the result of profound thought, yet bear the stamp of profound beauty. Clare's life is in the country. There are those who study the country, and read the volume of the town by its side; there are those who bring to the study of the country extensive readings and learning; there are those who make each scene of country life only the key to their own ima-

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ginations, and move, indeed, very far from the scenery of their original thought; but Clare takes the country literally as it is; he brings to it no learning, no historical suggestion; he seeks in the country none of the monuments of haughty human grandeur; he unfolds no political philosophy; he seeks no high idealization; he takes the lesson lying on the surface, and frequently it is so simple and natural that it affects us to tears. The fields of Nature are not so much a study to which he retires, or an observatory which he mounts; they are rather a book which he reads, and, as he reads, turns down the page. We should be prepared to expect after this, what we do actually find—an extreme homeliness of style and thought—we mean homeliness in its highest and best sense —not lowness, not vulgarity—the very reverse of all these. Clare walks through the whole world around him with the impression, that he cannot go where "universal love smiles not around." His whole soul is a fountain of love and sensibility, and it wells forth in loving verse for all, and to all creatures. The lessons of his verses may be described as coming, rather than being sought; for they grow up before him; he does not dig for them, and, therefore,

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his poems are rather fancies and feelings than imaginations. He throws his whole mind, with all its sensitiveness, into the country; yet, not so much does he hang over its human life as the life of Nature, the love and the loveliness of this beautiful world. Traditional tales he does not narrate. A bird's nest has far more attraction to his eyes than the old manor-house, or the castle. The life of the cottage, too, is a holy life for him; his home is there, and every season brings, day by day, its treasures of enjoyment and of peace to him. In a new and noble sense all his poems are pastorals; he sings of rural loves and trystings, and hopes, and joys. He never, indeed, loses himself, as many of us do, in vague generalities, for he has seen all he mentions in his song; he has been a keen observer of the ways of Nature; he knows her face in all its moods, and to him the face is always cheerful. Other poets go out into the walks of Nature to spend a holiday; they love her, but to see her is an occasional pleasure, but to Clare it is an every-day existence. He has no holiday with Nature; he walks with her as friend with friend. Other poets select a river, or a mountain, and individualise it, but to Clare all are but parts of the

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same lovely Home, and as every part of the home is endeared—the chair, the shelf, the lattice, the wreathing flower, the fire-place, the table—so is every object in Nature a beloved object, because the whole is beloved. Other poets entertain, as they enter the avenues of Nature, a most solemn awe and dread: we have said that Clare never forgets himself in low coarseness, so neither does he ever shrink or shiver beneath the dread of an overaweing presence; he walks with Nature as an angel walks with goodness—naturally, cheerfully, fraternally.

Fancy, Feeling, and Philosophy or Reflection, these are the characteristics of the verses before us. Most rural poets have indulged merely in the Feeling, but the Feeling has not been sufficiently sensitive or profound for Reflection, and the mind has not been active enough for Fancy —that is rich and ariel humour of our poet, in which he enters into the life of an insect. Insects, which to many are, have been, and will be, simply an annoyance, are to him fairies with coloured hood and burnished wings, disguised in a sort of splendid masquerade, rocked to sleep in the smooth velvet of the pale hedge rose, or slumbering like princes in the heath bell's pur-

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ple hood, secure from rain, from dropping dews, in silken beds and painted hall; a jolly and a royal life this seems, this band of playfellows mocking the sunshine on their glittering wings, or drinking golden wine and metheglin from the cup of the honied flower. It is in a deeper mood that the ploughman reflects upon the eternity of Nature; to the simplest things in Nature, to his eye, there is entwined a spirit sublime and lasting: the daisy, trampled under foot strikes its root into the earth, and in the distant centuries of time, the child will clap its tiny hands with pleasure and cry "A Daisy!" its little golden bosom frilled with snow, will be the same, as bright as when Eve stooped to pluck it in Eden. Cowslips of golden bloom, will come and go as fresh two thousand years hence as now; brooks, bees, birds, from age to age, these will sing on when all the more ambitious things of earth shall have passed away; and not only the fact continues, but the fact in the same form; for Clare, like Audubon, is not content to be merely sentimental, he fixes his eye on the proprieties and ever recurring mysteries of Nature, all Nature's ways are mysteries, hence "the red thighs of the humble bee" travel wide and far, when he

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"Breakfasts, dines, and most divinely sups
With every flower, save golden buttercups,
On whose proud bosoms he will never go,
But passes by with scarcely 'How do 'e do?'
Since in their snowy, shining, gaudy cells,
Haply the Summer's honey never dwells."

Eternal youth and eternal mystery, the unfading beauty and the unfading sublimity of Nature—these are everywhere seen; seen as remarkably in the most insignificant as in the most majestic. The fancies and the freaks of Nature are a sort of pledge of unfailing truthfulness.

"With the odd number, *five*, her curious laws
Play many freaks, nor once mistake the cause;
For in the cowslip pips, this very day,
Five spots appear, which time wears not away,
Nor once mistakes in counting—look within
Each pip, and five, nor more nor less, are seen.
So trailing bindweed, with its pinky cup,
Five leaves of paler hue go trailing up;
And many a bird, too, keeps the rule alive,
Laying five eggs, nor more nor less than five.
But flowers—how many own their mystic power,
With five leaves ever making up the flower!
The five-leaved grass, mantling its golden cup;
Of flowers—five leaves make all for which I stoop:
The briony in the hedge, that now adorns
The tree to which it clings, and now the thorns,
Owns five starred, pointed leaves of dingy white;
Count which I will, all make the number right.

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The spreading goose-grass, trailing all abroad,
In leaves of silver-green about the road,
Five leaves make every blossom all along:
I stoop for many—none are counted wrong.
'Tis Nature's wonder, and her Maker's will,
Who bade Earth be; and Order owns Him still
As that superior Power, who keeps the key
Of wisdom and of might, through all eternity."

The Laureat of the Birds' nests—nests often seen, but never disturbed. The nest of the Pettichap, close to the rut-galled waggon-road, so snugly contrived, although with not a clump of grass to keep it warm, or shielding thistle spreading its spears abroad—built like an oven, through a little hole—

"Scarcely admitting e'en two fingers in,
Hard to discern, the birds' snug entrance win;
'Tis lined with feathers, warm as silken stole,
Softer than seats of down for painless ease,
And full of eggs, scarce bigger e'en than peas;
Here's one that's delicate, with spots, as small
As dust, and of a faint and pinky red:
Well, let them be, and Safety guard them well—
A green grasshopper's jump might break the shell."

In the same strict individuality of description we have the nest of the nightingale, whose

"Melody seems hid in every flower
That blossoms near her home. These harebells all
Seem bowing with the beautiful in song;
And gaping cuckoo flower, with spotted leaves,
Seems blushing at the singing it has heard."

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Stepping from the nightingale, we come to another nest, with

"Five eggs, pen scribbled o'er with ink their shells,
Resembling writing scrawls, which Fancy reads,
As Nature's poesy, and pastoral spells.
They are the yellowhammer's; and she dwells
Most poet-like, where brooks and flowery weeds,
As sweet as Castaly her fancy deems;
And that old mole-hill is Parnassus' hill,
On which her partner haply sits and dreams
O'er all his joys of song."

These citations are very far from being in our Bard's highest voice of song, but they show, in his walk, an English Audubon; they reveal an intimacy and acquaintance with Nature; an eye perpetually on the watch to notice the colouring and the scenery of things, as well as the thing itself. We remember no Poet of any walk, who has lived so much with Nature; who has pressed so far within her visible portals; who has so reverently gathered the mosses and the wild flowers growing in the neighbourhood of her temple. Ambition to reach the glory of the Shekinah has frequently interfered with the perception of the beauties in the outer court; it is not from inability to penetrate so far, but from modesty and sensitiveness, that Clare has taken his chief delight in lingering

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over common things, and folding in fondness to his heart the least and most fragile of Nature's forms, and finding the things of beauty and the joy for ever where none but those who love Nature with a lover's passion ever look. But the individuality of colouring is preserved when any other objects of Nature are referred to, the two developements aways attendant upon a love of Nature, namely, exceeding tenderness, and delicate and truthful painting are found in ample abundance in these verses. How feelingly is the universal love of the Robin sketched :—

"How many are the lowly minds,
That hear and welcome thee anew;
Not Taste alone, but humble hinds
Delight to see and praise thee too.
The veriest clown beside his cart
Turns from his song with many a smile,
To see thee from the hedge-row start
To sing upon the stile.

The maiden mark'd, at day's decline,
Thee in the yard, on broken plough,
And stops her song to listen thine,
Milking the brindled cow.

Thy simple faith in man's esteem
From every heart hath favour won;
Dangers to thee no dangers seem;
Thou seem'st to court them more than shun.

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The clown, in winter, takes his gun,
The barn-door-flocking birds to slay,—
Yet, shouldst thou in the danger run,
He turns his tube away.

Go where one will—in every spot
Thy little, welcome mates appear,
And, like the daisy's common lot,
Thou'rt met with everywhere.

'Tis wrong that thou should'st be despised,
When these gay fickle birds appear;
They sing when Summer flowers are prized—
Thou at the dull and dying year.
Well! let the heedless and the gay
Bepraise the voice of louder lays,
The joy thou steal'st from sorrow's day
Is more to thee than praise."

Listen to the following descriptive touches of a Summer Morning.

"The cocks have now the morn foretold,
The sun again begins to peep,
The shepherd, whistling to his fold,
Unpens and frees his captive sheep;
And every leaf that forms a shade,
And every flow'ret's silken top,
And every shivering bent and blade,
Stoops, bowing with a diamond drop.

Now let me tread the meadow paths,
While glittering dew the ground illumes,
As, sprinkled o'er the withering swaths,
Their moisture shrinks in sweet perfumes.

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Robin sketched:—

"How many are the lowly minds,
That hear and welcome thee anew;
Not Taste alone, but humble hinds
Delight to see and praise thee too.
The verdant elown beside his cart
Turns from his song with many a smile,
To see thee from the hedge-row start
To sing upon the stile.

The maiden mark'd, at day's decline,
Thee in the yard, on broken plough,
And oops her song to listen thine,
Milking the brindled cow.

The simple faith in nature's charm
From every heart hath flown away:
Dangers in thee no dangers seem,
Thou seem'st to warn them more than shun

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And hear the beetle sound his horn,
And hear the skylark whistling high,
Sprung from his bed of tufted corn
A hailing minstrel in the sky.

First sunbeam calling night away,
To me how sweet thy summons seems,
Split by the willow's wavy grey,
And sweetly dancing on the streams."

All these illustrations prove how literal is Clare's rendering of the Truth of Nature; he indulges in no extravaganzas; all his images are simple, natural, and affecting; he never selects images he has not seen: perhaps, the words *mountain* and *forest* do not occur throughout his poems. They are moulded from the long level wastes and fens, the vast moors of his own and the adjacent counties. Some have scouted the idea of poetry, and boldness of thought and variety of conception in the fen country; they have not been there, nor have they learned the philosophy of our poet when he says:—

"Be thy journey e'er so mean,
Passing by a cot or tree,
In the rout there's something seen,
Which the curious love to see.
In each ramble, Taste's warm souls,
More of Wisdom's self can view,
Than blind Ignorance beholds
All life's seven stages through."

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Of course, scenery materially influences character, and gives tone and colouring to the poet's mind; yet the richness, the strength, the melody are not in the scenery, but in the Poet's soul, and that soul finds its beauties and its interests everywhere: and the Fens, and the scenes about them have their own peculiar impressions, and those frequently of a highly interesting and pictorial character. From scenes like those in which Clare was born and reared, Alfred Tennyson derives his inspiration, where

> "The long dun wolds were ribb'd with snow,

where

> "A sluice of blackened waters slept;"
> And o'er it, many, round, and small,
> The clustered marish mosses crept."

Of course, if the proposition is to be put, the vote we give is our voice for the mountains, but the lowland levels must not be despised. Is there monotony in the landscape, or in the mind that surveys it? mountains and cataracts are monotonous to the idealess mind. Look out upon those long lines of road, and field, or in winter, all this wide landscape turned into a kind of inland ocean, over which the boats drift to and fro in pursuit of the long caravans

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of wild fowl. Is there nothing inspiring to the reflective mind, too, in the fact that human industry and enterprise have turned the swamp into a fruitful field? that those long lines of dyke and ditch are the evidences of man's conquest over Nature in her most unpropitious moods? In thoughts like these may not even the Fen land wear a sublimity and a majesty beyond even the mountain and the waterfall? To some minds Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire may seem the very Nazareth of Poetry; but they have there, and have ever had, grange, and park, and meadow; skylarks from of old have sung there behind the broken cloud; winds have panted over the moor. The fountains of admiration and of mystery well up, even in those lands for those who like to drink of those waters; and to such, the country becomes as suggestive as a prairie or a savannah. Men and women, we may further say, too, were born in those regions, and they have become learned in the art and mystery of loving and of mourning; there, they have their church-yards and their ingle nooks; and where all these are, can man help occasionally uttering himself in poetry? Passion, is it not within him, and is it not this that

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wakens the inspiration around him. And injustice, and wrong, and poverty, are not they there? and where they are, will they not occasionally flood the heart with a current of song? It is thus then we vindicate from contempt the *study* of our Poet.

At the risk of exciting a misunderstanding and a sneer, we may call Clare the Wordsworth of Labour. In saying this, the great distance both of attainment and position is borne in mind, and perhaps the immeasureable distance of original genius. Of this, however, it is well nigh impossible to speak. Clare's genius is one of that order depending greatly upon cultivation and communion with exalted minds; Wordsworth is a teacher, appearing once in the course of many ages, and combining in himself some exquisite sympathies never found, in the same degree, in any poet of any previons age. All that learning, travel, education in the most sublime scenery of Nature, leisure, solitude, association with the most gifted spirits, long life—all that these combined could do was lavished upon him. The reverse of all these forms the history of Clare; yet in him we notice the same intense affection for the simplest things in Nature—the

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same disposition to self-communion—the same power to reflect back a lesson, and to treat Nature in all her visible manifestations as an intimation and a prophecy; the same exuberant overflowing of tenderness and love—the same disposition to preserve the soul in "a wise quietness"—the same love of the sonnet and ease of utterance through that formal barrier of expression. Is there not a vein of our old Patriarch's feeling in this, called

PLEASANT PLACES!

"Old stone pits with veined ivy overhung,
Wild crooked brooks, o'er which is rudely flung
A rail, and plank, that bends beneath the tread;
Old narrow lanes, where trees meet overhead;
Path styles, on which a steeple we espy,
Peeping and stretching in the distant sky;
Heaths overspread with furze bloom, gaudy shine—
Where wonder pauses to exclaim, 'Divine!'
Old ponds dim shadowed with a broken tree—
These are the picturesque of Taste to me.
While painting winds to make complete the scene,
In rich confusion mingle every green,
Waving the sketching pencils in their hands,
Shading the living scenes to fairy lands."

When it is remembered how Clare received his education, how little opportunity he has had of cultivating acquaintance with books,

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and how few associations he can have had of a refining character, the affluence of his language, and its exquisite music and freedom from every jarring coarseness become truly astonishing. The patronising tone in which some critics have spoken is most unjust, and, therefore, mean and tasteless. In the higher flights of song no comparison must be drawn between Bloomfield and Clare; the shoemaker must unbonnet his brow to the ploughman; the former never exercises or seems to possess a reflective power. We have here linked together a series of poems, several unpublished in any edition of our poet's works, and the four first written in lucid intervals in the lunatic asylum, and with these remarkable beauties of composition, we shall close the notice of this beautiful and exemplary genius.

BEAUTY AND VIRTUE.

"When Beauty fills the lover's eyes,
And lives like doubtful weather,
Her bosom seems to sleep with love—
They lie like birds together.

Love finds them angels, ready made,
So beautiful and blooming;
But Time comes in, though half afraid,
And rudely calls them women.

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Time, like a robber, every year
Takes all the fame he gives,
While Beauty only goes away,
And Virtue only lives."

THE MODESTY OF GREAT MEN.

"Great men are always kind, however rare,
And more like common men than others are.
The poor man saw the King and wondered—on
To find him only like his neighbour John:
Greatness will live with Kindness everywhere;
The sun shines brighter when the days are clear;
Time mellows fruit, and suns bring on the flowers,
And Greatness lives with Kindness in all hours:
Fame makes them giants with her idle praise,
Though common men at home, like common days:
But Pride is ever *low*, and will deride;
It nothing knows, for Ignorance is Pride.
Pride would be great, but Folly laughs aloud,
And Pride sinks down to nothing in the crowd."

The following lines are very touching, when it is remembered that they are the pensive utterances of a soul ill at ease from the very frailty of the tabernacle in which it is confined—a house too fragile for the strong spirit within it—the cause at once of every poet's madness. His organic sensibility, his nervous nature responding to every varying tone and intimation, and his strong soul desiring to overleap the material pales and boundaries, and live

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entirely in the land, visiting it in his poetic dreamings,—

SIGHING FOR RETIREMENT.

"O TAKE me from the busy crowd,
I cannot bear the noise!
For Nature's voice is never loud;
I seek for quiet joys.

The book I love is everywhere,
And not in idle words;
The book I love is known to all,
And better lore affords.

The book I love is everywhere,
And every place the same;
God bade me make my dwelling there,
And look for better fame.

I never feared the critic's pen,
To live by my renown;
I found the poems in the fields,
And only wrote them down.

And quiet Epping pleases well,
Where Nature's love delays;
I joy to see the quiet place,
And wait for better days.

I love to seek the brakes and fern,
And rabbits up and down;
And then the pleasant Autumn comes,
And turns them all to brown.

To common eyes they only seem
A desert waste and drear;

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To taste and love they always shine
A garden through the year.

Lord, keep my love for quiet joys—
Oh! keep me to thy will!
I know Thy works, but always find
Thy mercies kinder still."

TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

"I love to hear the Nightingale—
She comes where Summer dwells—
Among the brakes and orchis flowers,
And foxglove's freckled bells.

Where mugwort grows like mignionette,
And molehills swarm with ling;
She hides among the greener May,
And sings her love to Spring.

I hear her in the Forest Beach,
When beautiful and new;
Where cow-boys hunt the glossy leaf,
Where falls the honey-dew.

Where brambles keep the waters cool
For half the Summer long;
The maiden sets her pitcher down,
And stops to hear the song.

The redcap is a painted bird,
And sings about the town;
The Nightingale sings all the eve,
In sober suit of brown.

I knew the sparrow could not sing;
And heard the stranger long:
I could not think so plain a bird
Could sing so fine a song.

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I found her nest of oaken leaves,
And eggs of paler brown,
Where none would ever look for nests,
Or pull the sedges down.

I found them on a white thorn root,
And in the woodland hedge,
All in a low and stumpy bush,
Half hid among the sedge.

I love the Poet of the woods,
And love to hear her sing,—
That, with the cuckoo, brings the love
And music of the Spring.

Man goes by art to foreign lands,
With shipwreck and decay;
Birds go with Nature for their guide,
And God directs their way—

God of a thousand worlds on high!—
Proud men may lord and dare;
Power tells them that the meanest things
Are worthy of His care.

HOME HAPPINESS.

"Like a thing of the desert, alone in its glee,
I make a small home seem an empire to me,
Like a bird in the forest, whose world is its nest,
My home is my all, and the centre of rest.
Let Ambition stretch over the world at a stride,
Let the restless go rolling away with the tide,
I look on life's pleasures as follies at best,
And, like sunset, feel calm when I'm going to rest.

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I sit by the fire in the dark winter's night,
While the cat cleans her face with her foot in delight,
And the winds, all a cold, with loud clatter and din
Shake the windows, like robbers who want to come in;
Or else from the cold to be hid and away,
By the bright burning fire see my children at play,
Making houses of cards, or a coach of a chair,
While I sit enjoying their happiness there.

I walk round the orchard on sweet summer eves,
And rub the perfume from the black-currant leaves,
Which, like the geranium, when touched, leave a smell
That lads'-love and sweet-brier can hardly excel.
I watch the plants grow, all begemmed with the shower,
That glitters like pearls in a sun-shiny hour;
And hear the pert robin just whistle a tune,
To cheer the lone hedger when labour is done.

Joys come like the grass in the fields springing there,
Without the mere toil of attention or care;
They come of themselves, like a star in the sky,
And the brighter they shine when the cloud passes by.
I wish but for little, and find it all there,
Where peace gives its faith to the home of the hare,
Who would else, overcome by her fears, run away
From the shade of the flower and the breeze of the day.

O the out-of-door blessings of leisure for me!
Health, riches, and joy!—it includes them all three.
There Peace comes to me—I have faith in her smile—
She's my playmate in leisure, my comfort in toil;
There the short pasture-grass hides the lark on its nest,
Though scarcely so high as the grasshopper's breast;
And there its moss-ball hides the wild honey-bee,
And there joy in plenty grows riches for me.

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Far away from the world, its delusions, and snares—
Whose words are but breath, and its breathings but cares—
Where trouble's sown thick as the dews of the morn,
One can scarce set a foot without meeting a thorn—
There are some view the world as a lightly thrown ball,
There are some look on cities like stones in a wall—
Nothing more. There are others, Ambition's proud heirs,
Of whom I have neither the courage nor cares.

So I sit on my bench, or enjoy in the shade
My toil as a pastime, while using the spade;
My fancy is free in her pleasure to stray,
Making voyages round the whole world in a day.
I gather home-comforts where cares never grew,
Like manna, the heavens rain down with the dew,
Till I see the tired hedger bend wearily by,
Then like a tired bird to my corner I fly."

ON AN INFANT KILLED BY LIGHTNING.

"As fearless as a cherub's rest,
Now safe above the cloud,
A babe lay on its mother's breast
When thunders roared aloud.
It started not to hear the crash,
But held its little hand
Up, at the lightning's fearful flash,
To catch the burning brand.

The tender mother stayed her breath
In more than grief awhile,
To think the thing that brought its death
Should cause her babe to smile.

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Aye, it did smile a heavenly smile
To see the lightning play;
Well might she shriek when it turned pale,
And yet it smiled in clay.

O woman! the dread storm was given
To be to each a friend;
It took thy infant pure to heaven,
Left thee impure to mend.
Thus Providence will oft appear
From God's own mouth to preach:
Ah! would we were as prone to hear
As Mercy is to teach!

And now we take our leave of Clare; but in conclusion, it may be well to say that he continues to pour forth melody after melody: still they are scattered, we suppose, carelessly about. Should they not be inquired after? many are in the possession of Dr. Knight, the late Physician of the Northampton Asylum. Shall they not, at some early time, be gathered and given to the world or to that portion of it disposed to prize these treasures and curiosities of Literature? The specimens given above abundantly prove how worthy they are of preservation. Can they not be preserved for even an ephemeral fame?

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JAMES HOGG,

THE ETTRICK SHEPHERD.

HERE is one of the most extraordinary instances of the force of character, in lifting from circumstances the most unpropitious, to a place of note and importance in the literature of the land. As every reader will know or surmise, our shepherd was born in Scotland, on the banks of the Ettrick, in Selkirkshire; he was born of a race of shepherds; all his progenitors, he tells us, were shepherds of that country. His father had been a shepherd; having, however, saved a little money, he took a lease of the farms of Ettrick House, and Ettrick Hall, and then commenced dealing in sheep; but at length, owing to a great fall in their price, and his principal debtor absconding, he was irretrievably ruined, became bankrupt, and every thing was sold by auction, and his parents were turned out of doors without a farthing in the world. Thus, he was born in the midst of sorrows, he never

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had more than six months schooling; he was soon sent out to the hills to herd the cows, although he had been taught sufficient to read the Bible, and says further, that he had, before his first quarter was out at school, tried writing, and had horribly defiled several sheets of paper with copy lines, every letter of which was nearly an inch in length. He seems to have derived the bent of his mind from his mother, who was learned in old ballads; to her, it seems, we are principally indebted for that peculiar genius which inspired the "Queen's Wake." She was a sort of self-taught genius, and perceiving the tendencies of James's mind, she laboured to cultivate his powers, and fan them into flame, by the traditions and circumstances with which her memory was stored. In his autobiography, the Poet says, "it will scarcely be believed that at so early an age, I should have been an admirer of the other sex. It is, nevertheless, strictly true. Indeed, I have liked the women a great deal better than the men, ever since I remember. But that summer, when only eight years of age, I was sent out to a height, called Broad-heads, with a rosy-cheeked maiden, to herd a flock of new-weaned lambs, and I had my mischievous cows to herd besides. But, as

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she had no dog and I had an excellent one, I was ordered to keep close by her. Never was a master's order better obeyed. Day after day, I herded the cows and the lambs both, and Betty had nothing to do but to sit and sew. Then we dined together every day at a well near to the Shiel-sike head, and after dinner I laid my head down on her lap, covered her bare feet with my plaid, and pretended to fall sound asleep. One day I heard her say to herself, 'Poor little laddie! he's juist tired to death,' and then I wept till I was afraid she would feel the warm tears trickling on her knee. I wished my master, who was a handsome young man, would fall in love with her and marry her, wondering how he could be so blind and stupid as not to do it. But I thought if I were he, I would know well what to do." Professor Wilson says, "we do not remember, in the whole range of autobiography, a more beautiful or more affecting boy anecdote than this, so simple in its character, and yet so profound and true in its nature." What a lovely subject for the pastoral painter! wonder that it has not yet been produced upon the canvass. By the time he was fifteen years of age he had served a dozen masters, and poor enough he seems to

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have been the whole of the time. He had two shirts, so bad that he could not wear them, and, therefore, went without; as no braces were worn at that time, or rather, perhaps, in that district, by persons in Hogg's circumstances, he had great difficulty in keeping up his trousers, so as to hide those parts of the person that, in English society, it is not considered quite decent to expose. By what force was it that this ragged shepherd boy was moved out of these most unpropitious spheres? He became the intimate and acquaintance of many of the most eminent, and wealthy, and distinguished men of his day, the correspondent of Lord Byron, and the companion of Wilson; surely it is an illustration of the irrepressible force of Genius. The rags of the shepherd laddie have a kind of majesty about them; they hang in the Halls of Intellect like a crysalis in a museum, speaking plainly of the bright winged creature that has emerged from them. In his memoirs, he tells us how he learned to play the fiddle; and how, in the cow-house and stable, where he generally had his bed, he sawed over his old Scottish tunes, disturbing nobody but himself and his associate quadrupeds, whom he supposed to be highly delighted with his strains; at all events

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they never complained, which the biped part of his neighbours frequently did, to his pity and great indignation. In fact, he does not seem to have been expert with the bow, and on one occasion, in the dead of night, unseen by any one, he so electrified a musician with his creaking notes that he scampered away, convinced that he had listened to a delusion of the devil. He was badly off for books, but he procured the "Life of Sir William Wallace," and the "Gentle Shepherd;" but what seems to have fired his fancy most was, "Burnet's Theory of the Conflagration of the Earth." When he was eighteen years of age, he was obliged to write a letter to his brother, and having never drawn a pen for a number of years, he says he had actually forgotten how to make sundry letters of the alphabet, so he had either to print or patch up the words in the best way without them. By and bye he found friends—he obtained a better supply of books, and he began to write verses. The first song he contrived to publish, was "Donald Macdonald," to the air of "Woo'd and Married and a'." We cannot enter into the spirit of the ditty now, as at the time when it was written and sung. Our space will not permit us to quote it; it was, however, extra-

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ordinarily popular, though its author was quite unknown. There are two or three anecdotes about it worth repeating.

There chanced to be about that time a great Masonic meeting in Edinburgh, the Earl of Moira in the Chair; on which occasion Mr. Oliver, of the house of Oliver and Boyd, then one of the best singers in Scotland, sung "Donald Macdonald." It was loudly applauded, and three times encored; and so well was Lord Moira pleased with the song, that he rose, and in a long speech descanted on the utility of such songs at that period—thanked Mr. Oliver, and promised him his whole interest in Scotland; this to the singer—yet, strange to say, he never inquired who was the author of the song!—There was at that period, and a number of years afterwards, a general Macdonald, who commanded the northern division of the British army: the song was sung at his mess every week-day, and sometimes twice or thrice. The old man was proud of, and delighted in it, and was wont to snap his thumbs and join in the chorus. He believed to his dying day that it was made upon himself; yet, neither he nor one of his officers ever inquired who was the author.

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Hogg once heard this redoubted song in the theatre at Lancaster. It took exceedingly well, and was there three times encored; "And there," says he, "was I sitting in the gallery, applauding as much as anybody. My vanity prompted me to tell a jolly Yorkshire manufacturer, that night, that I was the author of the song. He laughed excessively at my assumption, and told the landlady that he took me for a half-crazed Scotch pedlar."

It is not our purpose to narrate especially how Hogg became introduced to the Publishing world.—He became an author. His quarrels with his publishers are most amusing as narrated by himself; but he seems never to have commanded much respect; nor did his poems obtain much more than a fleeting and temporary popularity, He published in all about from thirty-one to thirty-five volumes. He was wanting in prudence: he was ambitious and vain: he was careless over most of his productions, and boasts that he seldom corrected or revised what he had written. In 1814, Duke Charles of Buccleuch made a present of a small farm on the Altrive lake, in the wilds of Yarrow; and as at that time he had owing to him money, which was soon paid, to the amount of

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about one thousand pounds, he might have stocked his farm, and have continued happy, but he took an adjoining farm, and thus was completely ruined. The Duke of Buccleugh esteemed him highly: he appears to have been received and entertained on terms of friendship by both duke and duchess. But poor Hogg's days closed in poverty. Towards the close of his life he visited London; there he spent some time, and was wonderfully lionized. To a man so susceptible of vanity it must have been a delicious draught: but even then disasters thickened around him. He arranged for the reissuing of his works, and went home to prepare them; but the publisher to whom he had entrusted them failed, and this was a blow to his hopes.

He died at Altrive, in November, 1835; his grave and his birth-place are but a few hundred yards asunder, for he was buried at Ettrick. Hogg was not much esteemed, apparently, in his neighbourhood; he had distanced his neighbours so far in the chase that, doubtless, some considerable feelings of jealousy mingled with their emotions towards him. He was not looked upon, either as a good farmer, or shepherd; and for his bookmanship, it was

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regarded with some contempt, as a short cut by which he had gained an unfair advantage over his fellows. Professor Wilson travelled to Ettrick to attend his funeral; he seems to have been the only person of note there. The day was dark and dismal, windy and cloudy; everything looked bleak. The ground was covered with a sprinkling of snow; as soon as the funeral was over, all the attendants, who were mostly neighbours, and relatives, were chatting over their every-day affairs. Wilson lingered by his grave; when all the rest were gone he stood by it long after it had been covered in. The true hearted Poet understood and could appreciate best the departed. The lofty, perhaps, always best understand the low. A stone has been raised by the widow over the remains of her husband; a harp is sculptured on a border at the top, and beneath it the inscription, James Hogg the Ettrick Shepherd, who was born at Ettrick Hall, 1770, and died at Altrive Lake, the 21st of November, 1835; and at the foot is added, "This stone is erected as a tribute of affection by his widow Margaret Hogg." Hogg used to boast that he was born the same day of the month as Burns; but this assertion was contradicted

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by the parish register. "We cannot" says William Howitt, "but admire the thoughtful delicacy which induced the widow to omit the day of his birth altogether, though carefully inserting the day of his death."

We have long been led to expect from Professor Wilson a life of the Shepherd. When will it appear? What a stirring piece of Biography and of Nature may we not expect; this will be, in the Professor's own vein—rivalling, we fancy, (should the world ever see it,) that glorious and unrivalled Dissertation on the Life and Poetry of Burns. The difference between these two men was, indeed, great; it was a difference entirely in themselves. Burns' was an entire, a healthy, and upon the whole, well balanced soul; it was—to quote the often-cited sentence—a many-sided soul. Hogg's, on the contrary, was one-sided. Their outer life had been, to a great degree, the same. The Ploughman, indeed, had many more early advantages than the Shepherd; and the kind of early education through which Burns passed, perhaps in no slight, but in an altogether momentous degree, made the difference between them.—Certainly the conjunction of their names suggests more differences than resemblances.

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Amongst the Poets of Labour Elliot may be regarded as the Crabbe, and Hogg as much more the Scott than the Burns. We are not disposed to make any comparison in detail between these two; for the shepherd would sadly suffer from the comparison. The conjecture is not unreasonable, that self-government, humility, and a disciplined diligence, might have produced from the Shepherd many far more worthy things than any of those which we have. Even the collected edition of his works, in the wild and erratic fancies of unguided genius, no one ever indulged more amply than did he; his pen most readily seized the Legends and Traditions abounding in the localities he visited. His fancy was still further illumined by an extraordinary wonder; the whole of his works may not inaptly be termed, "Tales of Wonder." His poetry is the result of the inspiration of Superstition: he has written some verses in honour of that suspicious old Dame, in which he has distinctly shown that he does not yield to the popular prejudices of vulgar minds against her: his writings, prose and verse, are a perfect chronicle of her deeds: he looked back to the times when witches were ducked and burnt with something

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more than a silent sorrow. Mourning over her departure from the land, he says,—

"She is gone, that thrill'd the simple minds
Of those I loved and honoured to the last—
She who gave voices to the wandering winds,
And moulded spirits on the midnight blast;
At her behest the trooping fairies past,
And wayward elves, in many a glimmering band;
The mountains teemed with life, and sore aghast
Stood maid and matron 'neath the mystic wand,
When all the spirits rose, and walked at her command.

These were the days of marvel, when our king,
As chronicles and sapient sages tell,
Stood with his priests and nobles in a ring,
Searching old beldame for the mark of hell,
The test of witchcraft, and of devilish spell;
And when I see a hag, the country's bane,
With rancorous heart, and tongue of malice fell,
Blight youth and beauty with a burning stain,
I wish for those old times, and Stuarts back again."

In the following verses he delineates the peculiar sources of his inspiration, and the influence of the wonderful over his fancy:—

"Oh, I remember, as young fancy drew,
How oft thou spokest in voice of distant rill—
What sheeted forms thy plastic finger drew,
Thron'd in the shadow of the moonlit hill,
Or in the glade, so motionless and still,
That scarcely in this world I seemed to be;
High on the tempest sing thine anthem shrill,
Across the heaven upon the meteor flee,
Or in the thunder speak, with voice of majesty."

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In this Ode to Superstition we have, in a few pages, the picture of Hogg's ill-balanced mind. There is nothing poetical, but rather something truly pitiable, in the spectacle of a superior mind mourning over the departure of phantoms and supernatural beings from the mountain, the forest, and the glen: with Superstition Devotion dies out, and corruption is born; the faith of men and women was purer and better when funeral processions could be traced in the burning coals of the cottage fire—when shrouds and coffins bounced out of the grate—when the wail of the plover, or the hooting of the owl, brought bodements and meanings to the eye as well as to the ear—when every cave, lane, fell, cross road, cairn, was haunted by the spectral shade of a murdered pedlar, or harper, or phantom of a bleeding lady—when the maidens met at New Year's night with the mysterious cake to prick with the pin, or on the eve of St. John went to the church to watch for the shades of those who were to die during the future year—when the fairies lingered in the leaf of the tree, or the bell of the flower. All the verses of Hogg exhibit that kind of imaginative awe which lives on the fruit and food yielded by superstition. His images from

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Nature are all surrounded with the beings of another day: what an array of fairies, witches, bogles, ghosts, we have. He seems to transport his mind back to the time when every object in Nature was the home, and beneath the guardianship of some spiritual being; when there was a spirit in every dingle, and the muttering of some potent power in every gale; when Superstition was privileged to erect her gibbets and kindle her fires in every village and town. Hogg's poetry abounds with the traces of the Saxon faith; he had fancy, but little imagination; he could not read the moral meaning of this wizard lore; he could not see, for he had not a religious nature, that to the really poetic eye and mind the world is as truly haunted to-day as it ever has been, and ever will be; for the belief in the supernatural of which Superstition is only a bastard and a corruption is an important element in all true poetry. All ground is haunted ground to the imaginative man; not haunted by the memories merely of the past, but by the ever present witchery and beauty of Nature and Humanity. To the true poet, every thing he sees is but a shadow of the Unseen; the Invisible stands everywhere behind the visible;

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Great Nature is not a Creator, but a child of something Greater than Nature. With Hogg, all who doubted the existence of warlocks and fairies were Sceptics and Sadducees. He did not perceive that he and the men of his faith were Sceptics; that they surrendered man and his affairs, and Nature and her cunning designs, to the hands of Caprice and Chance. They made the planet whereon we live, to be a ball, tossed about in a limbo of vanity; they made Nature into a mountebank and a fair, and turned her sublime theatre of wonders into a peep-show of posture masters and clowns. To balance the Natural with the super-natural, was a work far beyond the power of the Shepherd's mind; he had wonder, but he had no veneration; he had fancy, but little faith; he therefore made the wonderful the law-giver of his poems; he did not hold the wonderful in suspension and obedience to some higher law. In our times poetry depends but little upon the introduction of ghostly or superstitious machinery; the highest strokes of all poetry have been achieved without this kind of spiritual intervention; but Hogg yielded himself perpetually to its guidance and influence. Still he was a wonderful person. There was in his character a curious combina-

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tion of tenderness and vulgarity, extreme coarseness and exquisite sensibility. Sometimes his soul seems to sob and overflow with sympathy, and we are surprised at the frequent ebullitions of something almost approaching to generosity of sentiment. This eye, for the most striking points of natural beauty, was very keen, and all the softening influences of Nature fell with peculiar, and sometimes apparently with awful tenderness on his spirit. The fact seems to be, indeed, that he had so long associated with coarse men, before he became a literary character, that they had imparted an ineradicable coarseness to his manners and his character. Further, it must be said, that vanity is always coarse and low minded; vanity is ever revolving round self as a centre, and the vanity of Hogg was of a more coarse, and complete, and ludicrous kind, than anything of the sort in the History of Literature. There is scarcely an exalted name among our modern great men with which he did not place himself upon a parity. In a note to the "Pilgrims of the Sun," upon a sentiment, by no means extraordinary or uncommon, he says, "It has often been suggested to me, that the dangerous doubt expressed in these four lines has proved a text

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to all Dr. Chalmers's sublime Astronomical discourses. I am far from having the vanity to suppose this to be literally true, but if it had even the smallest share in turning his capacious and fervent mind to that study, I have reason to estimate them as the most valuable lines I ever wrote." The lines to which we refer are simply these, where the wanderer, looking upon the stars, asks—

> "And has a living God
> Bled in each one of all these peopled worlds?
> Or only on yon dark and dismal spot,
> Has one Redeemer suffered for them all?"

This is sufficiently disgusting. But he boasted, also, that he had, in his "Queen's Wake," beaten Sir Walter Scott on his own ground. Speaking of the imaginary slight he received from Lord Jeffrey, and from the Edinburgh Review, he says,

"From that day to this, Mr. Jeffrey has taken no notice of any thing that I have published, which can hardly be expected to do him any honour in the long run. I should like the worst poem I have since published to stand a fair comparison with some that he has strained himself to bring forward."

He always had the audacity to describe

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himself as the principal originator of "Blackwood's Magazine," and, of all things in the world, he was fond of intimating that he was at first intended for the Editor. He confesses, himself, that in his correspondence with Lord Byron, he joked with him about his approaching marriage.

"I assured him that he was going to get himself into a confounded scrape; I wished she might prove both a good mill and a bank to him, but I much doubted they would not be such as he was calculating on, I think he felt that I was using too much freedom with him."

Here was a combination of coarseness and vanity; these were his great sins, and the surpassing wonder is, that they did not only obscurate and darken, but fairly, and thoroughly extinguish all the softer lights and intimations of a nobler and more gentle being, which glanced and gleamed over his soul, for such intimations were surely there; for the beauty and glory of Nature, in whose presence he had perpetually lived, had prevented his mind from sinking to the same low standard as that to which his manners had been reduced.

Some of the descriptive touches of his genius

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impersonate before you, prompt as a day-beam, the scenery of Nature. Let the reader picture to his eye the following :—

"They oar'd the broad Lomond, so still and serene,
And deep in her bosom how awful the scene!
O'er mountains inverted the blue waters curled,
And rocked them on skies of a far nether world;
All silent they went, for the time was approaching—
The moon the blue zenith already was touching;
No foot was abroad on the forest or hill,
No sound but the lullaby sung by the rill."

"Beyond the grizzly cliffs that guard
The infant rills of Highland Dee,
Where hunter's horn was never heard,
Nor bugle of the forest bee;
'Mid wastes that dern or dreary lie,
One mountain rears its mighty form,
Disturbs the moon in passing by,
And smiles above the thunder-storm;
There Avin spreads her ample deep,
To mirror cliffs that brush the Wain,
Whose frigid eyes eternal weep,
In Summer suns, and Autumn rain.
There matin hymn was never sung,
Nor vesper, save the plover's wail;
But mountain eagles breed their young,
And aerial spirits ride the gale.
The noontide fell so stern and still,
The breath of Nature seem'd away;
The distant sigh of mountain rill
Alone disturbed that solemn day."

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"The heath-cock had whirred at the break of the morn,
The moon of her tassels of silver was shorn;
When hoary King Edward lay tossing in ire—
His blood in a ferment, his bosom on fire;
His battle-fires, stretched o'er the valley, were still,
As Eden's pine forests that darkened the hill."

The following description of the heights of Ben Macduich contains those fine and graphic veins to which we have referred, in a high degree:—

"On grey Macduich's utmost verge I stood,
The loftiest cone of all that desert dun;
The seas afar were streamered o'er with blood,
Dark forests waved, and winding waters run;
For nature glowed beneath the setting sun,
The western shadows darkening every dale,
Where dens of gloom, the sight of man to shun,
Lay shrouded in impervious magic veil,
While o'er them pour'd the rays of light, so lovely pale.

But, oh! what bard could sing the onward sight—
The piles that frowned, the gulfs that yawned beneath,
Downward a thousand fathoms from the height,
Grim as the caverns in the land of Death—
Like mountains shattered in the Eternal's wrath,
When fiends their banners 'gainst his reign unfurled—
A grisly wilderness! a land of scathe!
Rocks upon rocks in dire confusion hurled;
A rent and formless mass—the rubbish of a world!

As if by lost pre-eminence abased,
Hill behind hill erected—locks of grey,

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And every misty morion was upraised,
To speak its farewell to the god of day.
When tempests rave along the polar way.
Not closer rear the billows of the deep,
Shining with silver foam, and marred with spray,
As up the midway heaven they war and sweep,
Then foiled, and chafed to rage, rode down the broken steep.

First died upon the peaks the golden hue,
And o'er them spread a beauteous purple screen,
Then rose a shade of pale cerulean blue,
Softening the hills and hazy vales between;
Deeper and deeper grew the magic scene,
As darker shades of the night heaven came on;
No star along the firmament was seen,—
But solemn majesty prevailed alone
Around the brows of Eve upon her Grampian throne."

These citations evidence fine descriptive power; but for the more noble powers and moods of the poets we look in vain: in Hogg there is no reflection, no linked or concentrated thought, and but little of truly generous or noble sentiment. Considering over how many volumes his writings have extended, it is doubtful if any instance of celebrity can be mentioned where the high lessons of humanity are so slenderly delineated: these writings are not ennobling. It may be said in reply to this, that those writings are the best in which moral truth is not so much exhibited, enforced, and ex-

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pounded, as those where it forms a part of the natural action of the story; but this, which is indeed true, does not save the reputation of our Shepherd. On the whole, the natural action is coarse and low, though, in several instances, we have redeeming beauties; perhaps the chief of these is Kilmeny—a lovely maiden, pure as pure could be, who, for her exceeding purity, was translated to the spirits' land, and permitted to revisit earth again. And the rhyme and the images are beyond all praise. Judge of these few selections—

"When many a day had come and fled,
When grief grew calm, and hope was dead;
When mass for Kilmeny's soul had been sung,
When the bedesman had prayed, and the dead bell rung—
Late, late in a gloamin' when all was still,
When the fringe was red on the westlin hill,
The wood was sere, the moon i' the wane,
The reek of the cot hung over the plain,
Like a little wee cloud in the world, its lane;
When the ingle low'd with an eiry flame,
Late, late in the gloamin' Kilmeny cam' hame!

'Kilmeny, Kilmeny, quhair haif ye beine?
Lang haif we socht beth holt and deine;
By lynn, by furde, and greinwudde tree,
Yet ye ir helsome and fayir to see.
Quhair gat ye that joup of the lilye scheine?
That bonny snoode of the byrk so greine?

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And these rosis, the fayrist that ever war seine!
—Kilmeny, Kilmeny, quhair haif ye beine?'

Kilmeny luckit up with ane lovelye grace,
But nae smyle was seine on Kilmeny's face
Als still was her luke, and als still was her e'e,
Als the stillnesse that lay on the emerant lee,
Or the myst that sleips on ane waveless sea.
For Kilmeny had beine scho kend nocht quhair,
And Kilmeny had seine quhat she culde not declayre;
Kilmeny had beine quhair the cock nevir crew,
Quhair the rayne nevir fell, and the wynd nevir blew.
But it seemit as the herpe of the skye had rung,
And the ayries of heauin playit runde her tung,
Quhan scho spak of the luvelye formis scho had seine,
And ane land quhair synn had nevir beine—
Ane land of love, and ane land of lychte,
Withoutten sonne, or mone, or nycht;
Quhair the ryver swait ane lyving streime,
And the lychte ane pure and cludless beime:
The land of vision it wald seime,
And still an everlestyng dreime.

In yond greinwudde there is a waike,
And in that waike there is a wene,
And in that wene there is a maike,
That nouther has flesh, bluid, nor bene;
And dune in yon greinwudde he walkis his lene.

In that greine wene Kilmeny lay,
Her bosom happit with flouris gay;
But the ayre was soft, and the silence deipe,
And bonnye Kilmeny fell sunde asleipe.
Scho kend ne mair, nor openit her e'e,
Till wekit by the hymnis of ane farr countrye.

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Scho wekit on ane cuche of the sylk se slim,
All stryppit with the barris of the raynbowis rim;
And luvlye being is runde war ryfe,
Quha erst had travellit mortyl lyfe;
And aye they smilet, and 'gan to speire,
'What spirit hes brochte this mortyl heire?'

They liftit Kilmeny, they ledde her away,
And scho walkit in the lychte of ane sonless day:
The skye was ane dome of crystel brichte,
The fountyn of vizion and fountyn of lichte:
The emerant feildis war of dazzling glow,
And the flouris of everlestyng blow.
Then deipe in the streime her bodye they layde,
That her yuith and beautye mocht nevir fede;
And they smylit on hevin, quhan they saw her lye
In the streime of lyfe that wanderit by.
And scho herde ane songe, scho herde it sung,
Scho kend nochte quhair; but se sweitlye it rung,
It fell on her eare lyke ane dreime of the morne:
'Oh! blest be the daye Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spiritis see,
Now shall it ken quhat ane womyn may be!
The sonne that shynis on the worild se brychte,
Ane borrowit gleide frae the fountaine of lychte;
And the mone that sleikis the skye se duu,
Lyke ane gouden bow, or ane beimless sun,
Shall skulk awaye, and be seine ne mayir,
And the angelis shall miss them travelling the ayre.
But lang, lang aftir bethe nycht and day,
Quhan the sonne and the worild haif fleeit awaye—
Quhan the synnir has gone to his wesome doome,
Kilmeny shall smyle in eternal bloome!'"

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All this, and verses like these, exhibit great descriptive force, and fancy, and considerable tenderness too; but in the whole of his poems there is not a character towards whom our breast heaves with pride and admiration. There is not a sentiment kindling our highest moral feelings: With more of what may properly be termed genius, than almost any poet of the working classes, he is perhaps the one of whom they have the least occasion to be proud; there was so much of the dross of the mere worldling apparent in his own character. From his own confessions, his productions lead one to believe there was a strong blending of worldly tact; and we feel sad that we have to make the drawbacks from the general estimate of his powers, for his verses mirror magnificent natural scenery. His eye had beheld, his soul had sported, in all the strange amplitude of Nature's vast boundless theatre: Whatever else he felt, the soul of the forest was strong within him; he wrote beneath the glare of its lightnings, and the gleam of its sunsets and sunrisings. The roar of its woods and waters was for ever piping on his ear, the snatches of old songs, the carol and the lilt of old wild lyrics, these were the pages of the book

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whence he gathered his ideas. Tales of the maiden blighted in her beauty; of the young warrior struck down in his strength; of the old Hall haunted by ghost or fairy; of spots famous in battle, or in raid; of procession, or tourney, or festive merriment, or royal passage, or ducal entertainment. These stories were fused down into his memory, until they sported forth, like unexpected waters from a cave, shining with all the light of a poetic soul, and glittering and rippling with all the power and pathos of Song.

The estimate Professor Wilson has given of the Shepherd is a very high one; he places him in many moods of mind, side by side with Burns; and says, in reference to his love of the marvellous, "It is here where Burns was weakest, that the Shepherd is strongest—the world of Shadows, the airy beings that, to the impassioned soul of Burns seemed cold, bloodless, unattractive, rise up lovely in their own silent domains before the dreaming fancy of the tender hearted Shepherd. The still green beauty of the pastoral hills and vales, where he passed all his days, inspired him with ever brooding visions of Fairy land, till, as he lay musing on the brae, the World of Shadows seemed in the clear depths a softened reflection

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of real life like the hills and heavens in the waters of his native lake. When he speaks of Fairy land his voice becomes aerial as the very voice of the fairy people; serenest images rise up with the music of the verse, and we almost believe in the being of those unlocalized realms of space, and of which he sings like a native minstrel."

"And what can surpass many of the Shepherd's songs? The most undefinable of all undefinable kinds of poetical inspiration are surely songs. They seem to start up indeed from the dew sprinkled soil of a poet's soul like flowers; the first stanza being root, the second leaf, the third bud, and all the rest blossom, till the—song is like a stalk laden with its own beauty, and laying itself down in languid delight on the soft bed of moss; song and flower alike having the same 'dying fall.'"

Many of the songs of Hogg breathe a solemn and sacred spirit; we will instance the following:—

"Dweller in Heaven high—Ruler below—
Fain would I know thee, but tremble to know:
How can a mortal deem how it may be.
That being can ne'er be but present to Thee!
Is it true that Thou sawest me ere I saw the morn?
Is it true Thou knewest me before I was born?
That Nature must live in the light of Thine eye?—
This knowledge for me is too great and too high.

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That fly I to noonday, or fly I to night,
To shroud me in darkness, or bathe me in light,
The light and the darkness to Thee are the same,
And still in Thy presence of wonder I am!
Should I with the dove to the desert repair,
Or dwell with the eagle in clough of the air,
In the desert afar—on the mountain's wild brink,
From the eye of Omnipotence still I must shrink.

Or mount I on wings of the morning away,
To caves of the ocean, unseen by the day,
And hide in those uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there to be living and moving in Thee.
Nay, scale I the cloud in the heavens to dwell,
Or make I my bed in the shadows of hell,
Can science expound, or humanity frame,
That still Thou art present, and all are the same!

Yes, present for ever—Almighty! alone!
Great Spirit of Nature! unbounded! unknown!
What mind can embody Thy presence divine!
I know not my being—how can I know thine!
Then humbly and low in the dust let me bend,
And adore what on earth I can ne'er comprehend.
The mountains may melt, and the elements flee,
Yet an universe still be rejoicing in Thee."

THE COVENANTER'S SCAFFOLD SONG.

"Sing with me! sing with me!
Weeping brethren, sing with me!
For now an open heaven I see,
And a crown of glory laid for me.
How my soul this earth despises!
How my heart and spirit rises!
Bounding from the flesh I sever—
World of sin, adieu for ever!

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Sing with me! sing with me!
Friends in Jesus, sing with me!
All my suffering, all my woe,
All my griefs I here forego.
Farewell, terror, sighing, grieving;
Praying, hearing, and believing;
Earthly trust, and all its wrongings;
Earthly love, and all its longings.

Sing with me! sing with me!
Blessed spirits, sing with me!
To the Lamb our song shall be,
Through a glad eternity!
Farewell, earthly morn and even,
Sun, and moon, and stars of heaven!
Heavenly portals, ope before me!
Welcome, Christ, in all thy glory!

RINGAN AND MAY.

"I HEARD a laverock singing with glee,
And oh! but the bird sang cheerily;
Then I asked at my true love, Ringan,
If he kent what the bonny bird was singing.

Now my love, Ringan, is blythe and young,
But he has a fair and flattering tongue,
And oh! I'm fear'd I like ower weel
His tales of love, though kind and leal;
So I said to him, in scornfu' ways,
'Ye ken nae word that wee bird says.'

Then my love he turn'd about to me,
And there was a smile in his pawky e'e;
And he says, 'My May, my dawtied dow,
I ken that strain far better nor you;—
For that little fairy that lilts sae loud,
And hangs on the fringe of the sunny cloud,

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Is telling the tale, and chaunts, and chimes,
I have told to thee a thousand times;
I will let thee know how our strains accord,
And the laverock's sweet song, word for word:
"Oh, my love is bonny, and mild to see,
As sweetly she sits on her dewy lea,
And turns up her cheek and clear grey eye,
To list what's saying within the sky;
For she thinks my morning hymn so sweet,
Wi' the streamers of Heaven aneath my feet,
Where the proud goshawk could never won,
Between the grey cloud and the sun;
And she thinks her love a thing of the skies,
Sent down from the holy Paradise,
To sing to the world at morn and even,
The sweet love songs in the bowers of Heaven.

'"Oh, my love is bonny, and young, and chaste,
As sweetly she sits on her mossy nest!
And she deems the birds on bush and tree
As nothing but dust and drowl to me.
Though the robin warble his waesome chirl,
And the merle gar all the greenwood dirl,
And the storm-cock stnuts on his towering pine,
She trows their song's a mock to mine;
The linty's chirp a ditty tame,
And the shilfa's everlasting rhame;
The plover's whew a solo drear,
And the whilly whaup's a shame to hear;
And whenever a lover comes in view,
She cowers beneath her screen of dew.

'"Oh, my love is bonny! her virgin breast,
Is sweeter to me nor the dawning east;

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And well do I like, at the gloaming, still
To dreep from the lift, or the towering hill;
And press her nest, as white as milk;
And her breast as soft as the downy silk."'

Now, when my love Ringan had warbled away
To this base part of the laverock's lay,
My heart was like to burst in twain,
And the tears flowed from my eyne like rain;
At length, he said, with a sigh, full long,
"What ails my love at the laverock's song?"

Says I, "He's ane base and wicked bird,
As ever rose from the dewy yird;
It's a shame to mount on his morning wing,
At the yetts of heaven, sic sangs to sin;
And all to win, with his amorous din,
A sweet little virgin bird to sing,
And wreck, with flattery and song, combined,
His dear little maiden's peace of mind.
Oh, were I her I would let him see
His songs should all be lost on me."

Then my love took me in his arms,
And 'gan to laud my liefou' charms;
And I would not so much as let him speak,
Nor stroke my chin, nor kiss my cheek;
For I feared my heart was going wrong,
It was so moved at the laverock's song.

Yet still I lay with an upcast e'e,
And still he was singing sae bonnilie;
That, though with my mind, I had great strife,
I could not forbear it for my life;
But as he hung on the heaven's brow,
I said, I ken not why, nor how,
"What's that little sinner saying now?"

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Then, my love Ringan, he was so glad,
He leugh till his folly put me mad,
And he said, "My love, I will tell you true,
He seems to sing that strain to you;
For it says 'I will range the yird and air
To feed my love with the finest fare;
And when she looks from her bed to me,
With the yearning love of a mother's e'e,
Oh, then I will come and draw her nearer,
And watch her closer and love her dearer,
And we never shall part till our dying day,
But love and love on for ever and aye.'"

Then my heart, it bled with a thrilling pleasure,
When it learned the laverock's closing measure;
And it rose and rose and would not rest,
And would hardly live within my breast;
Then up I rose, and away I sprung,
And said to my love, with scornful tongue,
That it was one big and burning shame,
That he and the lark were both to blame;
For there were some lays so soft and bland,
That breast of maiden could not stand;
And if he lay in the wood his lane
Quhile I came back to list the strain
Of an amorous bird, among the broom,
That he might lie quhile the day of doom.

But for all the sturt and strife I made,
For all I did, and all I said,
Alas! I fear, it will be lang,
Or I forget that love bird's sang;
And langer still or I can flee
The lad that told the song to me.

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THOMAS COOPER,

THE SHOEMAKER.

THE Shoemaker's craft seems ever to have been a noble cradle for great minds. It would seem an unprepossessing cradle enough, but even so it has been; the cordwainers made no inconsiderable stir in the cities of the Middle Ages. Whittier says:—

"The foremost still by day and night,
On moated mound or heather,
Where'er the need of trampled right,
Brought toiling men together:
Where the free burghers from the wall,
Defied the mail-clad master,
Than yours at Freedom's trumpet call,
No craftsmen rallied faster.

Let foplings sneer, let fools deride,
Ye need no idle scorner;
Free hands and hearts are still your pride,
And duty done, your honour.
Ye dare to trust for honest fame,
The jury Time empannels;
And leave to Truth each noble name
Which glorifies your annals.

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Thy songs Hans Sach are ringing yet,
In strong and hearty German;
And Bloomfield's lay, and Gifford's wit,
And the rare good sense of Sherman;
Still from his book a mystic seer,
The soul of Bohmen preaches,
And England's priestcraft shakes to hear
Of Fox's leathern breeches."

Thus nobly sings the true American spirit, of this calling; and among its followers we may add many worthy names:—Samuel Dunn of Truro, in Cornwall, who has been called our English Plato; Thomas Hartwell Horne, the author of the "Critical Introduction to the Sacred Writings," an immense body of learning in reference to the Scriptures of Truth. Our purpose now is to notice a man every way as remarkable as any who have claimed our notice—THOMAS COOPER—the author of "The Purgatory of Suicides." In some future volume we may give to our readers some account of Fox and Bohemen, and some others of the cordwaining fraternity; at present we must make one hero suffice.

To the early life of Cooper may be traced much of that bitterness which characterises it, it must be admitted, both in his life and his writings: we possess the means sometimes of

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allowing him to speak for himself. In his address to the jury upon the occasion of his trial as a Chartist, he says,—

"I was born at Leicester, but my mother being left in a state of widowhood in my infancy, removed with me to Lincolnshire, her native county. She procured me bread by the labour of her own hands; and I have often known her give me the last bit of food in our humble home, while she herself fasted. I frequently knew, in childhood, what it was to go shoeless, and to wear ragged clothing. My constitution was enfeebled by early and continued illness, and to this circumstance, perhaps, it was owing—rather than to any natural bent of mind—that I became very early devoted to reading, drawing, and music. My beloved mother inflicted hardships on herself in order to afford me encouragement: she frequently gave me her last penny for a circulating library book, a sheet of paper, a black lead pencil, or a bit of water colouring—and as I advanced in boyhood, she purchased me, with much self-denial, one of the old-fashioned, but sweet-toned instruments called a dulcimer, on which I learned to play with considerable skill. In this manner, gentlemen of the jury,

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surrounded with poverty, but wrapt up in a happy attachment to books, and drawing, and music—often varied by a ramble on the hills and among the woods above Gainsbro' in search of flowers—I passed the earliest portion of my existence."

He reverts with especial fondness to his mother in the Purgatory.

"Oh, heart, now cold in the devouring grave,
And torn no more by care and suffering;
How fondly didst thou to my darling cleave,
Although thy tyrant's but a worthless thing
Esteemed him. Rankled, deep, Oppression's sting
In thy recesses: still, in hardihood
Of conscious right, stern challenge thou didst fling
Back on thy foemen and their hireling brood;
And beat unto old age with free and youthful blood!

Mother, thy wrongs—the common wrongs of all
To labour doomed by proud and selfish drones,
Enduringly have fixed the burning gall
Deep in my veins; aye, in my very bones.
I hate ye,—things with surplices and crowns!—
Serpents that poison,—tigers that devour
Poor human kind, and fill the earth with groans
Through every clime! God send ye were no more!—
Ye'd have a merry requiem then from shore to shore!

Taxes for Kings and priests, a knave was wont
To filch from my poor widowed mother's toil;
And while the prowling jackall held his hunt,
He fattened on the offals of the spoil,
And mock'd the sufferers! How my blood did boil,

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When lately I beheld a gilded stone
Raised to the memory of this vermin vile,
And pious charity ascribed thereon:
To him who grey beneath the Poor's grim curse had grown.

I laid my aged mother near the dust
Of her oppressor; but no gilded verse
Tells how she toiled to win her child a crust,
And failing still toiled on: no rhymes rehearse
How tenderly she strove to be the nurse
Of truth and nobleness in her loved boy—
Spite of his rags."

We continue Mr. Cooper's narrative.

"At fifteen years of age—after many promises of patronage had been broken—my poor mother was compelled to send me to the stall to learn the humble trade and craft of a shoemaker. I plied the awl and bent over the last till I was three and twenty years of age; and if I can look on any period of my life with unmingled pride and pleasure, it is on that portion of it which I passed in this sedentary employment. My young enthusiasm found a vent in the composition of poetry for some time after I was thus placed at an occupation which only employed the hands without filling the mind; but the perusal of a memoir of Samuel Lee, professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, and an example of genius and per-

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severance triumphing over all the difficulties of lowly birth—soon animated me to encounter the labour of acquiring languages, together with the mathematics. It would ill become me to take up the time of the court with a recital of the particulars of my labour; suffice it to say that I formed a written resolution to acquire, in a given time, the elements of Latin and Greek and of Geometry and Algebra—and to commit the whole 'Paradise Lost' to memory, together with the seven best plays of Shakspeare. My resolve was exceeded in some respects, but failed in others. I committed to memory three books of Milton and the whole of 'Hamlet;' and these treasures I still retain. I went through a course of Geometry, and learnt something of Algebra. And in addition to the Latin and Greek, I mastered the elements of Hebrew and French: to these philological acquirements I have, in succeeding periods of my life, added some knowledge of the Italian, German, and other tongues, but less perfectly than my earlier studies. During the youthful period in which I was thus eagerly striving after elementary knowledge, I had to contend with want and deprivation sometimes in a severe degree. I could not earn more

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than ten shillings a week at my trade; and my poor mother, who began to advance in years, was often too much enfeebled to work. We were thus compelled to share a scanty pittance, barely sufficient to keep us in existence. Yet I look back to that time with pride and pleasure. In the summer mornings I used to rise at three or earlier, and walk miles, among the woods and over the hills, reading every inch of the way, and returning to my labour at the hour of six—not quitting my stall till nine or ten in the evening found me so far wearied with exertion that I frequently swooned off my seat. In the winter, because poverty prevented my enjoyment of a fire, I used to place a stool upon a stand to rest my book, and a lamp upon it, and with a bit of old rug under my feet and my mother's old red cloak over my shoulders, I used to keep up a gentle kind of motion, so as to keep off cold and sleep at the same time. In this mode I used to pass the winter hours from nine or ten to twelve at night, and from three or four to seven in the morning; my mind being too enfevered after learning to permit my sleeping long, even if I had remained in bed. During those laborious hours, in addition to my pur-

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suits in languages, I read over the productions of some of the most colossal intellects my country has ever produced—such as Hooker, and Cudworth, and Stillingfleet, and Warburton. Oh! those were happy hours, and I am proud of them!"

The man who has struggled thus has quite obtained the right to speak to his fellow-men in reference to education. Mr. Cooper has done so, and his "Eight Letters to the Young Men of the Working-classes" on the Pursuit of Knowledge, are the most valuable condensed and compendious body of advice upon topics connected with reading and thinking with which we are acquainted: it is to be procured for a few pence, and no young man, of any class, should be without it in his pocket. It may be easily surmised that Thomas Cooper did not continue long in life at the awl: he entered upon the profession of schoolmaster at Gainsborough, and after this at Lincoln. There he first became connected with a newspaper, the "Stamford Mercury." From Stamford he removed to London, and here he suffered many of the penalties of poverty; his library he was obliged to part with, volume by volume, for bread. He tells us that he subsisted almost

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by casually copying extracts from the rare works in the British Museum for Mr. Lumley, of Chancery Lane; or obtaining some little employment in writing for the Magazines. At last, when he had actually pawned his cloak and some other articles, he received a note offering him the editorship of the "Greenwich Gazette." When this paper terminated its career, he became the editor of the "Leicester Mercury." Leicester was his birthplace: at that time his mother was living, and he naturally desired to be nearer to her; thither then he removed, and there first commenced his notoriety as a Chartist lecturer. The manufactories revealed to him a state of things with which he had been previously unacquainted: he found families existing on four shillings per week wages; he found a wild and perhaps not unnatural hostility existing between master and workman, or rather say, between employers and employed; and, without for a moment impeaching the purity of Cooper's motives, for we doubt not he acted under the influence of the terrible drama of injustice acting around him, we fear that it must be said, that he did not labour to produce a better understanding between the two; and it is mys-

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terious and wonderful, that a man with a mind so capacious, and judgment so strong, did not perceive that the social evils of Leicester were precisely of an order that no possession of the principles of the Charter could remedy—evils, in fact, beyond the reach of legislative interference at all. However, he began to lecture on the Charter; he travelled from Leicester to the neighbouring counties,—among other places to the Staffordshire Potteries: In August, 1842, he arrived at Hanley on Saturday, the 13th of the month, and on the following day he addressed three assemblies at Fenton and Longton in the afternoon, and on the Crown Bank at Hanley, at night. He had taken for his text, "Thou shalt do no murder," and had loudly protested against the exercise of physical force. At one meeting in the Potteries, 30,000 colliers had held up their hands to keep the peace, a resolution to that effect having been put. However, disastrous events followed: at a meeting held upon the Crown Bank on the Monday, the colliers broke forth in wild riot, and several houses were set on fire. This, however, appears to have been after Cooper's departure; for, altogether ignorant of any disturbance, he was on his way to Manchester,

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when he was arrested as the direct instrument and cause of the violent outbreak. Upon his trial he proved an *alibi* on this indictment, and was acquitted: he was remanded for trial upon two other indictments. Upon his second trial he made a most determined, able, lengthy, and memorable defence before Judge Erskine. The trial lasted ten days, and the Tory papers made testy complaints of the insolent daring of a Chartist, who had thrown the whole county business of Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, into disorder. This was a magnificent compliment, not only to Cooper, but to the genius and power of the labouring classes represented by him. Ludicrous and laughable, as if a prisoner had not a right to throw the business of county courts into disorder until Doomsday, to prevent and avert his doom and sentence if he possessed the power to do so. And the fight was a triumphant one to Cooper, for there can be no doubt that the will and intention was to transport him. It is terrible, it is tremendous to think that this man, that such a man, was within a shade of being transported; that he would have been is certain, had he only been wanting in a little of that resolution which marked his mental charac-

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ter. He was acquitted of the charge of felony; he had been charged with incendiarism; he says, he "succeeded in so completely laying bare the falsehood of those who affirmed that I had been seen in the immediate neighbourhood of the fires, that the jury told the judge that they did not wish that part of his lordship's notes read to them which contained the evidence of the said witnesses, but preferred that his lordship should write '*mistake*' thereon instead. My aged friend, John Richards, and myself, were called up for judgment in the Court of Queen's Bench some weeks after, and Lord Denman, Sir John Pattison, and Sir John Williams, there read out the word 'mistake,' as inserted in Judge Erskine's notes; and thus openly proclaimed the fact, that my enemies had failed in their attempt to fix the brand of felony upon me."

Mr. Cooper further says, "My judge acted worthily, for one who bears the honoured name of Erskine, and allowed me all the fair play an Englishman could desire, who had to plead his own cause, without lawyer or counsel, against four regular gownsmen with horse hair wigs.

* * * * *

Yet, Sir William Follett, who again used his

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decaying strength, the hour before judgment was passed upon us in the Bench, pointed to me, with an austere look, and said, 'This man is the chief author of the violence that occurred, and I conjure your lordships to pass a severe sentence on the prisoner Cooper.'"

He was imprisoned altogether for two years and eleven weeks; the *results* of that imprisonment were neuralgia, rheumatism, and other torments, occasioned by sleeping in a damp cell, added to the generally injurious influences of imprisonment, and—the composition of "The Purgatory of Suicides."

In the preface to that Great Poem, the author says, "Scarcely three years have passed, and the great lawyer is no more. He wronged me, but I think of him with no vindictive feeling, for my imprisonment has opened to me a nobler source of satisfaction than *he* could ever derive from all his honours. He amassed wealth; but *The Times*, alluding to the frequent unhappy disappointments occasioned by Sir William Follett's non-attendance on cases he undertook to plead, says,—'So often did they occur, that solicitors and clients, in the agony of disaster and defeat, were in the habit of saying, that Sir William often took briefs

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when he must have known that he could not attend in court: and as barristers never return fees, the suitor sometimes found that he lost his money and missed his advocate at a moment when he could ill spare either.' I am poor, and have been plunged into more than two hundred pounds debt by the persecution of my enemies; but I have the consolation to know that my course was dictated by heartfelt zeal to relieve the sufferings and oppressions of my fellow-men.

"He was entombed with pomp; and a host of titled great ones, of every shade of party, attended the laying of his clay in the grave; and they purpose now to erect a monument to his memory. Let them build it: the self-educated shoemaker has also reared his; and, despite its imperfections, he has a calm confidence, that, though the product of poverty, and suffering, and wrong, it will outlast the posthumous stone block that may be erected to perpetuate the memory of the titled lawyer."

Thomas Cooper left Stafford Jail on the 4th of May, 1845, when he was just turned forty years of age, being born the 20th of March, 1805; he immediately came to London with his Poem and the Manuscripts, and the

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September following, the Purgatory was issued from the press. From that time to the present he has been constantly in the eye of that portion of the public who note the words and writings of the movement men. He has contributed numerous papers to many highly respectable periodicals; and he is well-known as a lecturer. We have not often heard him; but having had the opportunity, we can speak of his power in this respect. His lectures are too valuable to pay well, for all know that, popularly, those public lectures which range very far above the trivial and the tricksy, are but thinly attended. And in the lectures of Cooper a large amount of clearly defined knowledge and well-chosen anecdote is mingled with a calm, quiet flow of running and sustained eloquence; too chaste to be very highly appreciated. Speaking from our own experience we cannot say that we have listened to any ill-natured or ill-chosen observations, though we have heard such things remarked of his method of discourse; his voice is clear, and distinct, full, ample, and musical; but, perhaps, better fitted to express sublime emotions, to give lucid descriptions, or to rouse the martial passions, than to utter the pathetic plainings of natural

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tenderness. The range of subjects upon which he descants is very large, including the passing events of the day, the most stirring events of History, the great names of Biography, the doctrines of Taste, and of Political Economy. And in the course of his orations, what most pleases is the apparent entire honesty and manliness of the orator; the climaxes if they come, come naturally, they are not verbal or artificial. The periods are rounded by the method and the order of the thought. The subjects strike the auditor as having been well thought over, as perhaps being well read up for the delivery of the opinion, or the knowledge upon the matter in hand; for Thomas Cooper believes in the light of Good Books, and no man can listen to him for half an hour without perceiving that his acquaintance with literature is more than extensive; that he is more than a reader, he is a scholar, whose readings have not been the mere mechanical porings of a Dryasdust, but the notings and notchings of a man of strong and original genius. Scientific generalization he does not seem to possess, but the action, generalization, and synthesis, which is the property of every poet, he does possess; and he developes the

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possession of it, no less when he exercises the tongue, than when he uses the Poet's pen. Upon the whole, let our author speak on matters pertaining to questions of general interest, where the collisionary voices of party politics cannot be heard, and we do not believe the man lives in the kingdom more fitted to give to young aspirants after knowledge a large amount of valuable knowledge in a short space of time.

Upon the publication of the "Purgatory of Suicides," "The Britannia," the Conservative Journal, gave a most generous and laudatory review: this has been attributed to Dr. Croly, a great preacher, a great poet, and rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook. It is so eloquent, and so just, that we shall venture to cite it.

"Our judgment may be disputed—the world may disregard this mighty and daring effort of an irregular genius—though we do not think it will; yet, still we shall hold to our opinion that this Prison Rhyme is the most wonderful effort of intellectual power produced within the last century.

"There is nothing mean, low, vicious, or lascivious in the verse of this Chartist. He has the finest feeling for the beauty of the New

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Testament, for the sublimity of the Old; but the doubts of neglected youth cling to him, and shake his soul with the agony of unbelief. . . .

"The poem is written in the Spenserian stanza. Grander and more nervous than 'Childe Harold,' which in its reflective passages it somewhat resembles—evidencing much deeper reading, much profounder thought, much greater power of the forcible and terrible in expression, though with less beauty of poetic imagery—this Prison Rhyme comes nearer than any other poem in our language to the grand work of Milton. The spirit of that mighty master, which hitherto has looked so coldly and contemptuously on all its worshippers, has found out this imprisoned Chartist, and breathed upon him in his cell. Wonder of wonders, this self-taught shoemaker is hardly less versed in curious and mystic lore than the sightless bard, to whose mental vision all antiquity, and its fables, its heroes, and its creeds, seemed revealed. . . . . .

"With wonderful pomp and luxuriance of language does the author recall the great names of antiquity, and invest the form of each with peculiar and distinctive characteristics. The stanza, so difficult of management in an inferior

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hand, is by him wrought, even in the most elaborate and difficult descriptions, with as much ease as a skilled hand weaves osier rods into basket-work. He is master of his verse, and uses it as a master, not a servant. He makes it subservient to his thought; with a boldness more to be admired than condemned, he employs rhymes and words unauthorised by authority, rather than suffer his muse to be fettered by common-place rules. . . . .

"The second book opens with an address to the Lyre, and the poet recalls those great names of his fatherland whose verses form the brightest blazonry of her glory. His address to Milton, his poetic master, is rich in the passionate language of admiration. Such a strain has not been sung in England for two hundred years. Knowing that this verse has been written in a prison cell, that the author has been self-taught, that he was a poor Chartist shoemaker, we read in all the wonderment of an inexplicable dream. . . . .

"Through the whole ten books are the spirits of renowned suicides brought together—their forms, their attributes, their instincts, feelings, passions, described in glowing verse—and made to argue and dispute with each other on those

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great themes of life which from the beginning until this day have engaged the attention of the world—the life, the government, the destiny, and the hereafter of man. No extract of detached passages, no general description of the scope and aim of the poem, can give an adequate idea of its general character, or of the amazing poetic energy it exhibits. It concludes with a glorious vision. All heaven seems as a portal to a world stretched beyond it, where mankind regenerated dwell in blissful freedom."

It is mostly idle to speak about what might have been; but the sinewy and muscular power, the protracted grandeur of the "Purgatory of Suicides" are evidence enough of power of the highest grasp and compass. As yet this is *the* Poem of Labour. No one of Mr. Cooper's order has produced anything for lofty effort and completeness like this; this is poetry resulting from an acquaintance with what is most sublime in scholarship and immortal verse; from friendship with Dante, Milton, and Shelley; from the mighty names of Grecian and Roman History and Poetry; from the music of Handel, Haydn, and Mozart; it is poetry fired by a sense of the intolerance and injustice existing in Society, and by personal sorrows and woes.

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It is called a Prison Rhyme; and our Poet adds his name to the illustrious list of those who have turned a prison into a palace or a temple. Suffering, solitude, and silence—these three are great ministers when they come to the soul fit to receive their ministrations. Surely, in that cell in Stafford jail, ecstacies and raptures were felt, and visions of beauty and magnificence unfolded, which have struck a glorious balance against pain and wrong, and have made all the scenic realities of life tame and commonplace in the comparison: indeed, he has said—

> "Sorrow on earth hath uses: nutritive
> Of joy griefs often prove; and power to find
> Pleasures unfound before pains friendly give.
> Oh, state, beyond compare! and for the mind
> And body framed benignly."

What time he drifted about in Death's boat over the skyless sea, while the wierd and fleshless hand of the old Pilot, with his ghastly, glaring eyeballs, hushed and silenced the rude chafing and raving of those hoarse, mysterious waves. What time he roamed through the recesses of that grim cavern, with the supernatural gloom diffused from the tracery of woven rock—where stood the "triple colonnade" of "colossal images, of ache intense, and appre-

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hensive dread;" and that more horrid cavern, where the crowds of huge snakes, clothed in livid and baleful light, smote, with their forked tongues, upon the breasts of Iscariot and Castlereagh. Nor did the panorama of horror and terror alone pass through the cell; there, too, the giant-stemmed old Druid woods and oaks of Lindsay, with melodies of woodlarks and mellow-throated blackbirds, with chaste anemonies and azure-robed harebells; and all the sylvan melodies of river or forest-bough—they were all in the cell; fluttering bosoms of love-lorn maidens; shrill battle-trumpets cleaving the sky before the gorgeous tournament; and prancing steeds, bearing the carolling and courtly troubadour;—there also, the hall where the thrones were set in gorgeous show beneath the rainbow-roofed and column-gilt expanse—where crown and sceptre shed down radiance from gems and gold,—and the intermingled seats of strange, fantastic structure, where sat the great civic rulers and swayers of the mind of the ancient time; and then the spiritual Pantheon of the Good, won after the pathway, for many a mile, through the long terraces of the sphynx and the lion: and not only was the scenery gorgeous and magnificent beyond

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all the mere enchantments of stone-built cities, but the associates were the ghosts of the noblest and most distinguished sons and daughters of earth: Sardanapulus, and Chow Sin, that grey Cathaian autocrat, who wrapt the robe of deathly flame around them on that triumphal death-pyre; and Sappho, the singer of the early day, who made her harp echo the pangs and the scorns of love: the shades of great legislators—Lycurgus, and Themistocles; great orators—Demosthenes, and Socrates; great warriors—Hannibal, Pompey, and Otho;—all these, and crowds it is impossible here to particularise, thronged through the cells of the prison; and as they moved before the eye of the bard, they held high discourse of the thoughts and the things in which they were interested in life. It is difficult to see the great plan within Mr. Cooper's mind upon which the "Purgatory" was constructed—of course there must have been one. The artist, doubtless, sketched the whole work before him, on the canvass, before he proceeded to spread his colours, or to lay in over the vast perspective of pyramids, and colossal thrones, and palaces, in their architectonic pomp, the varying lights and shades; doubtless the language of one of his

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companion shades in the poem, is likewise the sentiment of Mr, Cooper.

> ——— "Spartan know, a truth sublime,
> These Portraitures set forth in this mysterious clime.
>
> By hybrid forms like these the sage or bard
> Of old pictured deep thoughts: he prescient
> Of mortal things, not dimly Mind's award
> In after life foresaw:—and thus hath lent
> Wise Nature, here, familiar emblems meant
> T' enfix our spirits reverence of Her high
> Unchangeable decrees."

The Poem is a wonderful revelry in all sorts of learning, near and remote; and in a future edition—(we hope many future editions will be called for)—the value of the book will be enhanced by the prefixing of the argument and intention before each canto, and by some historic account of the scenery painted, and the persons introduced. There is a propriety in the character of the shade in Hades, and the person in the real life, which cannot be seen but by those familiar with the life portraiture. The eclectic reviewer rated his value of the Poem most highly, from the various exordia with which the several sections open. We will not say one word to undervalue their pathos and their power; but the sublimity of the Poem

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lies in itself; in its terrible discussions of the great questions of Humanity—for the purpose of the book is evidently to unfold the grand mistakes, weaknesses, errors, and sins, by which the advancement of man has been retarded, either by the friends or foes of the human race. The first book conducts us to a Purgatory of Legislators where, in column-girt enclosure, rise thrones, fashioned like a fortalice, or tower, or shrine, shaped and overcanopied with perforated carvery, typyfying Fright and Mischief, Stealth and Guile, and the horrent forms of Superstition and Terror. There, wearing a tiara, and decked with amethysts and sapphires, sat Sardanapulus; and less illustrious, by show and garniture, Saul, Chow Sin, Marc Antony, Nero, and Appius Claudius; and here we are permitted to listen to a discussion on the developement of man. The Chinese vindicates the ancient civilization of his empire: Marc Antony plays the orator again, and ends his harangue, like an actor, for applause; and Lycurgus debates the question, only with a generousness of soul greater than we can give that stern legislator credit for.

The second book introduces us to a kind of pathway or cave, from the Limbo of Vanity,

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where Cleombrotus—he who, to enjoy Plato's Elysium, leapt into the sea—and Empedocles —"he who to be deemed a God leapt fondly into the flames of Etna," discourse together of those inner agonies which resulted in self-deception—the illusions and vexations of the mind. How terrible is the Purgatory of Traitors! The narration of the vision of Castle-reach is like a transparency of earthly beauty and meaning, brought into vividness and life by the play of hell fires behind it. Then we have in succession the Purgatory of Poets, the Purgatory of Sceptics, the Purgatory of the Epicure, of Mistaken Goodness, of Progress, and Faith. It is easy to see that all these states of spiritual being are intended to image forth the Purgatory of Earth, and the disciplinary fires by which the spirits of men are tamed and trained. Thus our readers will see something of the design and plan of this noble and full-grown production of genius: the design is colossal and stupendous. What a poem this would be for the artist to exercise his genius upon; how Martin's imaginative pencil, or Turner's mysterious colourings, would take shape and power from these wierd shadowings of thrones, and kingdoms, and men. The "Pur-

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gatory of Suicides" is a ghostly diorama of earth's history: it is no amusing tale—no careless and sportful rhyme; it is a series of successive pictures, the result of life-long study; it is a mosaic of every kind of marble of genius; or rather it is like the many dimly-defined shapes and outlines of vast mountains, brought out into full relief by the lurid raying forth of strange and supernatural flames. Its author has exercised his thought and invention on all things within the range of literature, ethics, and history; and the result of all this reading is poured into the debates of contending ghosts.

The book will, notwithstanding all this weighty excellence, never rise to high popularity. It is wanting, through the conduct of the story, in those universal human emotions which meet with responses in every human breast. The descriptions, as a whole, are too remote from general knowledge and sympathy, too learned—too much marked by intellectualization—too much like Southey and Shelley, in a sort of Oriental magnificence of illustration: the measure, too, of the poem is another barrier in the way of extensive popularity; its verse does not flow, like a river—it is sonorous, like metal; it is obedient to the hand of the master,

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—but then its obedience is not that of the harp-string, or the key, it is the obedience of the iron; the language bows before the hand of the master—it does not fly to do his bidding.

These are some of the characteristics of this great poem—this production of a gloomy prison—which places its author by the sides of Elliot, of Raleigh, of Bunyan, of Dante, and Tasso. Circumstances prevented him from making his work so complete as theirs: and between our friend and these names we make no comparison of power: but, like these men, he did not, in solitude, "with darkness and with dangers compassed round," yield himself to the emotions of doubt and of despair: when he was cut off from communion and fellowship with society, he betook himself to the mountains of Self-Communion; he became a Prospero, and beckoned to himself Ariel, and threw the spell of his mastery over Caliban. From the gloomy prison-house the ladder was upreared, the top of which reached to the goodly Spirit Land. He may well sing with Lovelace, the poet of another age and faith,

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and free do take
That for an hermitage.

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If I have freedom in my love,
And in myself am free;
Angels alone that soar above
Enjoy such liberty."

The following extracts will convey but a feeble idea of the book, whose every stanza opens up to the mind some new sublimity:—

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE PURGATORY.

"Above them curved the likeness of a roof
Of woven rock; strange, supernatural glare,
Diffusing from its tracery, that seemed woof
Of masonry, more mystical and rare
Than devotees of proud cathedral'd prayer
Witness, while worshipping, the Nazarene,
Pride lauding lowliness! and past compare
Of monkish mixtures, were the shapes I ween
Of shaft and capital that 'long that vault were seen.

Not as with Fashion of that gloomy age,
When Phantasy, in convent bondage bred,
Drew graces from distraction—mingling rage,
Grotesque of apes, with ire of angel's dread;
Aiming all contraries to blend and wed,
Until with hybrids she had fill'd the mind,
And with wild wonderment its powers misled,
So that its grasp, grown loose and undefined,
The shaven and shorn enchanters' might its freedom bind.

Not as with Fashion of that Twilight time,
When sky-born Truth, by priestly hands arrayed
In vulgar vestments of the motley mime,
Played conjurer in 'dim Religion's' shade;
And peasant thrall, by bell and book dismayed,

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Glanced tremblingly on corbel, niche, and pane;
Where imp, saint, angel, knight, with battle blade,
Griffin bat, owlet, more befooled the swain,
Till, when the incense fumed, round swum his 'wildered brain.

Not after pattern of old monkish mode—
Not as by wand of mitred magic hung,
The rocky arch that mystic aisle bestrode,
While clustered shaft and twisted pillar sprung
Forth from the floor; and floral festoons flung
Their crystal witchery from base to quoin,
And ever changing shapes in antics clung
To shaft, and capital, festoon, and groin,—
Seeming all forms of life—all grace of flowers to join.

But unimagined, unconceived, unknown,
Unspeakable, by man seemed all revealed
To those awed travellers as they journeyed on
Through that vast aisle, that rather glowed a field
Of caverned wonders, where each shape did yield
For evermore new changes, till the soul
Enervate with o'er-piled amazement reel'd
And sank, wishing an end unto her dole
Of wondering, pining,—now for prospect of her goal.

Methought I sped across the gloomy space,
From whence diverged each subterranean aisle,—
Thinking the dome vast porch unto some place
Of emblemed sovereignty; or typic pile,
Where sceptred suicides in kingly style
Might sit, as in some high imperial hall
And there eternity itself beguile
With pregnant descant on their earthly fall—
On fate—on mortal change—and being spiritual."

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CHRIST.

"He whom the Arimathean's tomb enclosed,
The Good—the toiling One—the crucified!—
Who, spite of guards, the bonds of death unloosed,
Scattering the men of iron, in their pride
Convulsed to helplessness, and forth did ride
Leading Captivity captive! Is he not,—
Magnific beam, thy power personified,—
Night tombed—and then, pouring dismay and rout
On darkness, while Earth's million morning voices shout?

I love the Gallilean—Lord and Christ,
Such goodness I could own; and though enshrined
In flesh, could worship. If emparadised
Beyond the grave no Eden I could find
Restored, though all the good of human kind
Were there, and not that yearning One,—the Poor,
Who healed, and fed, and blest! Nay, to my mind
Hell would be Heaven with him! Horror no more
Could fright, if such benignant beauty trod its shore."

THE ROBIN.

"Welcome, sweet Robin!—welcome, cheerful one!
Why dost thou slight the merry fields of corn,—
The sounds of human joy,—the plenty strown
From Autumn's teeming lap,—and, at gray morn,
Ere the sun wakes, sing to the things of scorn
And infamy and want and sadness whom
Their stronger fellow-criminals have torn
From freedom and the gladsome light of home—
To quench the nobler spark within, in dungeon'd gloom?

Why dost thou choose, throughout the live-long day,
A prison rampart for thy perch, and sing
As thou wouldst rend thy fragile throat? Away!
My little friend, away, upon light wing,

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A while,—beyond this house of suffering!
Away!—and I will watch for thy return,—
Thinking, meanwhile, how, by the silver spring
Mantled with golden lilies, thou dost turn
Thy pretty head awry, so meaningly, and yearn,

From out that beaming look, to know what thoughts
Within the barb-leaved hart's-tongue dwell—
The purple eye petalled with snow, that floats
So gracefully:—dost think the damosel,
Young Hope, kirtled with Chastity, there fell
Into the stream, and grew a flower so fair?
Ah! still thou linger'st, while I, dreaming, tell
Of pleasures I would reap, if free I were,—
Like thee,—to breathe sweet Freedom's balmy air.

Away!—for this is not a clime for thee—
Sweet childhood's sacred one! The hawthorns bend
With ruddy fruitage: tiny troops, with glee
Plundering the mellow wealth, a shout will send
Aloft, if they behold their feathered friend,
Loved 'Robin Redbreast,' mingle with their joy!
Did they not watch thy tenderlings, and wend
With eager steps when school was o'er, a coy
And wistful peep to take—lest some rude ruffian boy,

With sacrilegious heart and hand, should rob
Thy nest as heathenly as if 'Heaven's bird'
Were not more sacred than the vulgar mob
Of pies and crows? Flee,—loved one!—thou hast heard
This dissonance of bolts and bars that gird
Old England's modern slaves, until thy sense
Of Freedom's music will be sepulchred:—
Hie to yon jocund band of innocence,
And, 'mid their rapture, pour thy heart's mellifluence!

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Still linger'st thou upon that dreary wall
Which bars, so enviously, my view of grove
And stream and hill,—as if it were death's pall?
O leave this tyrant hold,—and, joyous rove—
Loved bird of Home,—Bird of our fathers' love,—
Where the thatched cottage, clad with late-blown rose
And sweet-brier and rosemary, thickly wove
With the dwarf-vine, its nectared garland shews
Unto the amorous bees that 'midst its sweets carouse.

Hasten, dear Robin!—for the aged dame
Calls thee to gather up the honeyed crumb
She scatters at her door; and, at thy name,
The youngsters crowd to see their favourite come.
Fear not Grimalkin!—she doth sing 'three-thrum,'
With happy half-shut eyes, upon the warm
Soft cushion in the corner-chair: deaf, dumb,
And toothless lies old Growler:—fear no harm,—
Loved Robin!—thou shalt banquet hold without alarm.

Ah! Chanticleer hath eyed the dainties spread
For thee, and summons his pert train the prize
To share. Lo! how the children ask with dread,
Of the old grandame with the glazed eyes,
'Why Robin does not come?' The pet one cries,
Because he sees thee not,—unpacified,
Ev'n with the apple tinct with vermeil dyes,
The first-born offers with a kiss! Abide
Not here, expected one,—lest woe the cot betide!

If thou return not, Gammer o'er her pail
Will sing in sorrow, 'neath the brindled cow,—
And Gaffer sigh over his nut-brown ale,—
While evermore the petlings, with sad brow,
Will look for thee upon the holly bough—

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Where thou didst chirp thy signal note, ere on
The lowly grunsel thou didst light, and shew,
With such sweet confidence,—thou darling one!
Thy blythsome face,—and, on thee, all cried 'benison!'

Alas!—I mind me why thou linger'st here:—
My country's happy cottages abound
No longer!—where they stood and smiled, uprear
The 'Bastile' and the gaol!—and thou hast found
Such refuge, Robin, as,—upon the ground
Where Alfred reigned, and Hampden fought and bled—
Where Milton sung, and Latimer was crowned
With glorious martyrdom,—is portioned
Unto our fathers' sons—who win with tears their bread.

Bread!—nay devour with greed the grovelling root,
As recompense of labour for their lords;—
Or, spurned, when begging to have, like the brute,
Fodder for toil, and coerced into hordes
Of midnight spoilers,—swell the black records
Of cruelty and crime. 'This dear, dear land'
Is dear no longer: its great name affords
Thoughts but for curses! Aye, where the brave band
Sang in the flames—lit by the brood of Hildebrand!"

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HUGH MILLER,

THE STONE-MASON.

THE Poetry of Science is quite of modern growth. There are many, doubtless, still in the world, who imagine that Poetry and Ignorance are companions, and that the progress of knowledge dispels the phantoms and the fancies of the poet's mind. It is wonderful how truly the noblest imagination harmonizes with true knowledge, discovery, and science. The poetry of the Book of Job, of Genesis, of Homer, of Shakspeare, is true, not only to the age in which it was written, but to every age; and not only to its native country, but so far as its imaginations correspond with universal facts, to every country the truest poetry is the least touched or disarranged by the advancing mind and the penetrating eye of man; for knowledge, indeed, dispels phantoms; it puts to flight chimeras, but it lights a lamp which reveals a temple never seen before—a shrine whose glories are

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all beyond the power of fancy to traverse, or of the most exalted genius to distance or explore. The discoveries of modern skill have made the fables of the old poets the mere tales of excited fancy as compared with the steady and deliberate delineations of the observing eye. What a retinue of attendant splendours crowd upon the eye before the teachings of modern Astronomy! Sir John Herschell's last volume on that science, to the mind able to apprehend it, hangs before the enraptured and astonished vision such glories as never for a moment crossed the fancy of the most dreaming spirit in the darker and earlier ages of the world. And Chemistry, with all its subtle fires and transformations; with all its alembics and mysterious retorts, deep hidden in the dark crevices of Nature; the occult doings of the Divine finger among all the magic scenery of size, and colour, and form: Gnomes and Fairies, the People of the Woods and the Mountains, Mysterious Voices, Phantom Shapes: the philosopher has abundance of these perpetually haunting him, and turning the darkness and sternness of life into a bright and spirit-peopled, and crowded, and coloured reality. Geology is one of the most triumphant demonstrations of

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the power of fact to transcend fiction. What forms have been disentombed by the wand of Comparative Anatomy! The discoveries of those who first followed the magnet were strange, and the astonishment excited, as every successive ship brought tidings of new islands studding the bosom of the deep, is inferior to the astonishment with which, in later times, we have been taught of worlds buried beneath that on which we now move, the wrecks of column and kingdom submerged beneath the waves, the mighty doings of Water and Fire, and millions of curiosities unreckoned of, until the probing and curious eye of fact sounded the depths and laid bare the wonders below.

Mr. Hugh Miller, a working stone-mason, has been one of the most diligent and enterprising of these discoverers. We know but little of him, except what we have gathered from his writings, all of which, so far as published in volumes, we have carefully read. Upwards of thirty years since he published a volume of poems: all his writings beside have been in prose, but all are characterised by true fancy,—frequently on his own theme of Geology —rising to Imagination. He has written nothing in which he does not exhibit the capacities and

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the powers of the Poet. We are not aware how far he has had to struggle with difficulties in the pursuit of his favourite knowledge—difficulties we know of an insurmountable nature to any but a strong and energetic man, he has had to confront, but he gives us some idea of the spirit in which he confronted them in his fine Geological Prose Poem, called "The Old Red Sandstone." And the cheerful spirit in which he set himself at once to labour, and to acquire knowledge is worthy of imitation by all who prize the lessons of instruction and the life of wisdom. He tells us that it is thirty years since he first set out, a little before sunrise, to make his first acquaintance with a life of labour and restraint, and says he, "I have rarely had a heavier heart than on that morning. I was but a slim, loose-jointed boy at that time, fond of the pretty intangibilities of romance, and of dreaming when broad awake: and—woeful change! I was now going to work at what Burns has instanced in his 'Twa Dogs,' as one of the most disagreeable of all employments—to work in a quarry. Bating the passing uneasiness occasioned by a few gloomy anticipations, the portion of my life which had already gone by had been happy

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beyond the common lot. I had been a wanderer among rocks and woods; a reader of curious books, when I could get them; a gleaner of old traditionary stories; and now, I was going to exchange all my day-dreams, and all my amusements, for the kind of life in which men toil every day that they may be enabled to eat, and eat every day that they may be enabled to toil!"

That first day's toil gave a character to the whole of his after life. In boring and cutting a way into the rocks of old red sandstone, there were many circumstances that excited our author's curiosity. Altogether the day passed by with fascinations and pleasure; the beginning of life was not so formidable as he anticipated; and he tells us that the next day he returned to the quarry convinced that a very exquisite pleasure may be a very cheap one, and that the busiest employment may afford labour enough to enjoy it. Although it was the beginning of winter, and the rimy frost was upon the ground, and the snow upon the hills, he had upon that cold morning begun to see that there is no necessary connection between a life of toil and a life of wretchedness; and he goes on to tell us that when his first

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year of labour closed, he found that his amount of happiness had not been less than in the last of his boyhood. He found there the important truth, which he presses on the attention of his readers in his writings, that there are few professions, however humble, that do not present their peculiar advantages of observation; none in which the exercise of the faculties does not lead to enjoyment.

We have said that Mr. Miller published a volume of Poems, and it is now lying before us. A few extracts, especially as it is a rare volume, shall be placed before our readers in the ensuing pages; but the volume wants the individuality of succeeding works. At the time when it was published the author must have been very young, and, therefore, it may be regarded as a work rich in promise; but it does not contain anything which can be compared with the productions of his later years. Fancy is there, and great sweetness and smoothness of expression, and an evident love of Nature, and capability of rendering some of her scenes into very sweet verse, but the Poetry is not so rich as in the "Old Red Sandstone." The following EPITAPH is full of pathos and meaning:—

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"Morsel pass'd o'er Death's dark swallow,
Here lies * * * * strak'd, puir fallow!
A' his whims an' wild moods over,
Mute the band, and staid the rover.

Dost thou wish to ken his failings?
Troth, guid friend, they were na sma' anes;
Yet though rude, and wild, and careless,
There are wiser folk could bear less.

Restless, as the restless sea, still;
Puir he was, and puir wad be still;
Warls gear, he didna reck it;
Earth his ain he scarce wad seek it.

Puir fock! he saw mean anes press you,
But, alas! could not redress you;
Vain folk! he look'd down upon you;
Rich folk! he sought nothing from you.

Mean heart, gang your ways, forget him,
But think twice before you wyte him;
When he breath'd ye durst na raise him;
Wretch, begone! nor blame, nor praise him.

Warm heart! pass na heedless by him;
Brave heart! let na fules decry him;
Leal heart! thou hadst sure caress'd him,
For the blin' wi' gowd might trust him.

What was guid in life he kent it;
Quiet he liv'd, he died contented.
Twa, three, honest bodies mourn'd him;
All the rest or blamed or scorn'd him.

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Here he lies, all calm and lonely;
Loftier brows maun lie as meanly;
Blume, ye wild field flowries o'er him!
Birdies, wi' your sangs, deplore him!"

MORNING.

How lovely the scene—like a Tiger asleep,
Unvex'd and unmurmuring reposes the deep;
Nor bent by the zephyr, nor strain'd by the blast,
The sheets of the sailor hang slack from the mast.
How lovely the scene! the pure dew-drops of night
On the gay tinted foliage hang sparkling and bright.
And waxes, more splendid, the beams they receive
As emerges, all glorious, the gem from the wave.
How lovely the scene! a fair wandering ray
To the depth of the thicket has travelled its way;
And like column of fire, all unflickering and red,
The trunk of the poplar grows bright in the shade.
How lovely the scene! like the star of the night,
Where the ice of the lake glimmers pale to their light;
The gay flowers of spring are spread over the lea,
And they bend their fair heads to the tread of the bee.
Hark! murmurs the stream in the depth of the grove,
And nestles the thrush and the blackbird above;
To its low ceaseless strain the gay warblings reply,
And the song of the field lark descends from the sky.

ON SEEING A SUN-DIAL IN A CHURCH-YARD.

Grey dial stone! I fain would know
What motive placed thee here,
When darkly opes the frequent grave
And rests the frequent bier.

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Ah! bootless creeps the dusky shade
Slow o'er the figured plain,
When mortal life has pass'd away,
Time counts his hours in vain.

Grey dial stone! I fain would know
What motive placed thee here,
Where sadness heaves the frequent sigh,
And drops the frequent tear.
Like thee carved, plain, grey dial stone,
Grief's weary mourners be;
Dark sorrow metes out time to them;
Dark Shade metes time on thee.

Yet sure 'twas wise to place thee here
To catch the eye of him
To whom Earth's brightest gauds appear
Worthless, and dull, and dim.
We think of time, when Time has fled,
The friend our tears deplore;
The God our light, proud hearts deny,
Our grief-worn hearts adore.

Grey dial stone! while yet thy shade
Points out those hours are mine;
While yet, at early noon, I rise
And rest at day's decline;
Would that the Sun that formed thine,
His bright rays beamed on me,
That I, thou aged dial stone!
Might measure Time like thee.

These are his verses, justifying all that we have said of them, and perhaps much more;

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but in the "Old Red Sand Stone" a peculiarly rich and racy fancy developes itself: from this fresh and unpretending book more rudimental information may be obtained in reference to geological formations, than from any half-dozen books in our language. Figures and analogies suggest themselves readily to the writer's mind, from all the regions of romance; from Shakspear, from the "Arabian Nights," from Smollet. The young man groping his way cannot err with a steady lamp like this in his hand as a guide. In reading this book he will find almost a panoramic display of the scenery of the Old Worlds; the reader is borne along to mark the rise and fall of dynasties of trees; he sails on a raft of some lepidodendron, down the lakes and ancient seas of the primeval world. We use an orrery to explain the motions of the heavenly bodies; but Mr. Miller has so completely caught the life, the colour, the scenery of the forest, and rock, and fish, and flower of that time, that, when he delivers his lecture to us, he paints so accurately, we have the figure, or the landscape, immediately presented to our view. Thus commenting on the remark that the Old Red Sand Stone is remarkably barren of fossils, that it is therefore unin-

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teresting, and that little is known of it, he pertinently says—

"Let the reader imagine a digest of English History, complete, from the times of Julius Cæsar to the reign of that Harold who was slain at Hastings, and from the times of Edward III. down to the present day, but bearing no record of the Williams, the Henrys, the Edwards, the John, the Stephen, and Richard, that reigned during the omitted period, or of the striking and important events by which their several reigns were distinguished.—A chronicle thus mutilated and incomplete would be no unapt representation of a geological history of the earth, in which the period of the Upper Silurian would be connected with the Mountain Limestome, or of the Limestone of Burdie House, and the period of the Old Red Sandstone omitted."

Again—

"Is it not a curious reflection that the commercial greatness of Britain, at the present day, should be closely connected with the towering and thickly-spread forests of arboraceous ferns, and gigantic reeds—vegetables of strange form and uncouth names, which flourished and decayed on its surface, age after age, during the

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vastly-extended term of the Carboniferous period, ere the mountains were upheaved, and when there was no man, as yet, to till the ground?

"Is it not a reflection equally curious that the invalids of the present summer should be drinking health, amid the the recesses of Strathpeffer, from the still more ancient mineral and animal debris of the lower ocean of the Old Red Sand Stone, strangely elaborated for vast but unreckoned periods in the bowels of the earth? The fact may remind us of one of the specifics of a now-obsolete school of medicine, which flourished in this country about two centuries ago, and which included in its *Materia Medica* portions of the human frame. Among these was the flesh of Egyptian mummies, impregnated with the embalming drugs,—the dried sinews and muscles of human creatures, who had walked in the streets of Thebes or of Luxor, three thousand years ago."

The following is a magnificent description of the formation of Coal Measures. Reader and writer are supposed to be upon the waves, and among the forests, of the actually submerging world.

"We have entered the Coal Measures. For

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seven formations together, our course, from the Lower Silurian to the Upper Old Red Sand Stone, has lain over oceans without a visible shore, though, like Columbus in his voyage of discovery, we have now and then found a little floating weed, to indicate the approaching coast. The water is fast shallowing. Yonder passes a broken branch, with the leaves still unwithered: and there floats a tuft of fern. Land, from the mast-head! Land, land, land! A low shore thickly covered with vegetation. Huge trees of wonderful form stand out far into the water. There seems no intervening beach. A thick hedge of reeds, tall as the masts of pinnaces, runs along the deeper bays, like water flags at the edge of a lake. A river of vast volume comes rolling from the interior, darkening the water for leagues with its slime and mud, and bearing with it, to the open sea, reeds, and fern, and cones of the pine, and immense floats of leaves, and here and there some bulky tree undermined and uprooted by the current. We near the coast, and now enter the openings of the stream. A scarce penetrable phalanx of reeds, that attain to the height, and well nigh to the bulk, of forest trees, is ranged on either hand. The bright and glossy stems seem

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rodded like Gothic columns; the pointed leaves stand out, green at every joint, tier above tier, each tier resembling a coronal wreath, or an ancient crown, with the rays turned outwards; and we see atop what may be either large spikes, or catkins.

"What strange forms of vegetable life appear in the forest behind. Can that be a club-moss that raises its slender height, for more than fifty feet from the soil? or can these tall palm-like trees be actually ferns, and these spreading branches mere fronds? And then these gigantic reeds! are they not mere varieties of the common horse tail of our bogs and morasses magnified some sixty or a hundred times? Have we arrived at some such country as the continent visited by Gulliver, in which he found thickets of weeds tall as woods of twenty years' growth, and lost himself amid a forest of corn fifty feet in height? The lesser vegetation of our own country, its reeds, morasses, and ferns, seem here as if viewed through a microscope: the dwarfs have sprung up into giants, and yet there appears to be no proportional increase in size among what are unequivocally its trees. Yonder is a group of what seem to be pines, tall and bulky it is true, but neither

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taller nor bulkier than the pines of Norway and America; and the club-moss behind shoots up its green hairy arms loaded with what seem catkins above their topmost cones. But what monster of the vegetable world comes floating down the stream, now circling round in the eddies, now dancing on the ripple, now shooting on the rapid? It resembles a gigantic star-fish, or an immense coach-wheel divested of the rim. There is a green dome-like mass in the centre that corresponds to the nave of the wheel or the body of the star-fish; and the boughs shoot out horizontally on every side, like sparks from the nave or rays from the central body. The diameter considerably exceeds forty feet; the branches originally of a deep green, are assuming the golden tinge of decay; the cylindrical and hollow leaves stand out thick on every side, like prickles of the wild-rose on the red fleshy lance-like shoots of a year's growth, that will be covered two seasons hence with flowers and fruit. That strangely-formed organism presents no existing type among all the numerous families of the vegetable kingdom. There is an amazing luxuriance of growth all around us. Scarce can the currents make way through the thickets of aquatic plants that rise thick from

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the muddy bottom; and though the sunshine falls bright upon the upper boughs of the tangled forest beyond, not a ray penetrates the more than twilight gloom that broods over the marshy platform below. The rank steam of decaying vegetation forms a thick blue haze, that partially obscures the underwood; deadly lakes of carbonic acid gas have accumulated in the hollows; there is silence all around, uninterrupted save by the sudden splash of some reptile fish that has risen to the surface in pursuit of its prey, or when a sudden breeze stirs the hot air and shakes the fronds of the giant ferns or the catkins of the reeds. The wide continent before us is a continent devoid of animal life, save that its pools and rivers abound in fish and molusca, and that millions and tens of millions of the infusory tribes swarm in the bogs and marshes. Here and there, too, an insect of a strange form flutters among the leaves. It is more than probable that no creature furnished with lungs of the more perfect construction could have breathed the atmosphere of this early period and have lived."

Thus have we condensed into a brief view a

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few leading names of those who have married Literature to Labour. The catalogue is far from complete, but space at present forbids the pursuit of the topic farther. It is hoped, however, that a similar volume may be produced soon in continuation of the glorious list of the Poets of the Poor, called "GENIUS AND INDUSTRY;" or, "MIND AMONG THE COTTAGES."

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